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For the use of Sister

~~Clementina Conyers~~

1737

Eusebia Pickering

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Our Ladys Priory

THE RULE
OF THE GREAT
S. AUGUSTIN
EXPOUNDED

By the Venerable Doctor HUGH of S. VICTOR.

Translated into French by the R. Father Charles de la Grangé

Canon Regular of S. VICTOR.

And now Publish'd in English for the use of the English

AUGUSTIN NUNS.

AT BRIDGES

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THE PREFACE

Or Explication of the First Point of the Rule

By the French Tranſlator.

DEarly beloved Religious, we ought above all things to love Almighty God, and then our neighbour; for theſe are principal precepts delivered to us in holy Scripture.

This Preface to our holy Father's rule ſo short in words but ſo large and full in the ſenſe it contains, was not uſually found at the begining of Saint Auguſtins Rule in the twelveth age where in appeared ſuch florishing Congregations of Canons Regular. Neither does Hugh

of S. Victor mention it, who lived in those times, and took such pains to know the excellent Rule he had embraced; and to set it in the brightest light, for the good and profit of his Brethern: but he begins his explication by those words which immediatly follow. *We command all who are settled in the Monastery &c.* It was not then necessary to set the Divine Commandements of Charity so often before their eyes, who had them engraven in their hearts in so profound and lively a manner. But since in process of time those celestial flames are by little & little relented, Charity must be expresly spoken of, and set in a clear view, as the ground and foundation of that holy life formed by the model of the primitive Christians.

This is not the publication of a new law, nor addition joined to the Rule; but an advertisment concerning the indispensable duty of all Christians, and

and a declaration of all the vertues which compoſe the particular Character of this holy Inſtitute. I therefore think it will not be unprofitable to give this Preface a little commentary, as Hugh of S. Victor has done to each particular of the body of the Rule. And what I shall ſay thereupon may ſerve fora Preface to this great man's work.

Whe ought above all things to Love Almighty God.

Should I pretend to repreſent the excellency of the Love of God, and expoſe the reaſons, why it is the firſt of the commandments in rank, in dignity, & in perfection; it would be to make a whole volume inſtead of a ſimple Preface; it would be to go wide of the chief deſigne of this work, should I undertake to explain in what ſenſe it is Truly ſaid that God is Charity, how this paſ-

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ſage of S. John is to be underſtood, *he that abideth in Charity, abideth in God, and God in him.* 1. John 4. 16. How the holy Ghoſt pours this divine vertue into our hearts, and how it alone will eternally ſubſiſt. *Whether Prophecies shal be made void; or tongues shall ceaſe, or knowledge shall be deſtroy'd.* 1. Cor. 13. 8. When faith and hope shall be no more in uſe. Nay it is to be fear'd that he who should undertake ſo conſiderable a work might ſink under the weight of his ſubject; for if, *The eye hath not ſeen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it enter'd into the heart of Man what things God had prepared for thoſe who Love him.* 1. Cor. 2. 9. How can we worthily expreſs the Excellence of Charity which brings us to ſuch ineffable bleſſing?

It will be much better for me to confine my ſelf to ſomething eaſier and more within my reach; as, to repreſent the motives which may excite

cite the desire of it in our hearts; to the end we may afterwards imitate that wise Marchant of the Gospel who having discovered a hidden treasure, sold all he had to get possession of it. We ought not to take any thing more to heart than the establishing our seives in a perfect Charity, which unites us for ever to God; since it was for this end he made all the order of nature and grace. In effect if we consider naturall things, why God has Created the World? why he has made Creatures so beautiful? why he has rank'd and ordered them whith so much wisdome? what was the design of this Excellent Operator, in creating man to his own image and likenes, in giving him the use of reason, and in frameing him a heart free in its motions? all this has been to make himself beloved; and one may say that the only recompense he expected for these effects of his omnipotence, was the heart of man.

But if we paſs from the Benefit of the Creation to that of the Redemption, we shall ſtill better acknowledge how much we are obliged to banish from our heart all other Loves, that we may entirely fill it with the Love of God: for if we ought to love him for having made us, how much juſter is it to Love him for having repair'd us, and *that* in ſuch a manner, as S. Bernard ſays, that is, for having redeemed us with ſo many tears, and ſuch abundance of blood? and if the creation of the world which coſt Almighty God but ſix words, or rather but one word ſix times repeated, is ſo conſiderable that the very Pagans are inexcuſable for not having learned to Glorifie God for it (that is to ſay, to Love him: for one cannot Glorifie him but by Loving him) how can Chriſtians who know that his Divine Majeſty has not only enriched them with theſe general fa-

favours, but has alſo beſtowed upon them an infinity of particular ones incomparably greater, how I ſay can they pretend to ſalvation without giving all their heart to Jeſus Chriſt?

And let no'ne imagin that they ſatisfie this eſſential duty by a languishing Love: for tho' there should be Chriſtians ſo inſenſible and ungratefull as to content themſelves with that: yet Perſons Conſecrated to God by a particular worship, Perſons who make a Publick Profeſſion of a Religious Life, and of renewing the Spirit of Charity which animated the Primitive Chriſtians; ſuch ought to Love God in a perfect manner, that is with a Love of preference, a Love inſurmountable, and always acting; ſo that they may Truly be ſaid to Love God above all that is Amiable; and are ſo firm in this Love that no evil is capable to ſeparate them from it; but they eudeavour in all their Actions

tions, and always, to do what may be moſt pleaſing to his Divine Majeſty.

This is the Firſt Diſpoſition that ought to appear in thoſe who would engage themſelves to live according to the Rule of S. Auguſtin, they muſt Love God Prefarably to all things. For when the Spouſe in the Canticles ſays that her beloved *hath Ordered Charity in her.* Cant. 2. 4. She means that he has regulated her Love, to fix it on different objects, according to their degree of beauty, of Excellency, and of perfection; to the end she may Love that moſt which beſt deſerves it, and haue leſs affection for that which is not ſo worthy of her inclinations: and as there is nothing ſo great, ſo Excellent, nor ſo perfect as God, the ſoul should alſo endeavour to Love him above all that in the world has any appearance of good, that is, more than Riches, Plea-

Pleaſures, Honours; more than Parents, Friends, Liberty &c. I do'nt deſign to treat here of that diſpoſition of heart only, which is neceſſary for all Chriſtians, and by which we ought to be ready rather to loſe and ſuffer all things, than to offend God; but alſo of an actuall renunciation, ſo entire and abſolute as to all that may withdraw us from that Sovereigne Good, that there may be no motion in our heart which is not referr'd as much as in us lies, to this divine object.

From this diſpoſition proceeds another which is of an equal obligation; and it is this, that no temptation should be able to ſurmount us in this Love; for we do not Love God above all things, if we can ſtill be shaken by the fears of wants, or pains; or if we fail in fidelity to our duties, through the apprehenſion of incommoding our ſelves a little, or of conſtraining our humours. By this

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we may perceive that the Holy Man Job did nothing more than neceſſary in that admirable patience which made him ſo ſubmiſſively ſupport the ſo ſudden and general a loſs of his children and goods; but that if his Charity as well as his patience had not been invincible; he had perish'd.

This teaches us alſo that the Martyrs did nothing too much in expoſing themſelves ſo generously to death, and enduring ſo many and ſuch Cruel Torments; they only comply'd with the duty of their Conſcience in the preſent conjuncture they were in. And if Almighty God ſhould put us into the like occaſions, we ſhould be obliged to ſhew as much conſtancy as they did, or run the riſque of our eternal ruin: therefore the Wiſe-man Says, *Many Waters cannot quench Charity, neither ſhall flouds overwhelm it.* Cant. 8. 7. But what are thoſe great Waters, what are thoſe Flouds? they are Croſſes,

ſes, afflictions, and tryals; they are diſguſts, privations, and temptations to which the Servants of Jeſus Chriſt ar expos'd in the way of ſalvation: for in all thoſe aſſaults they ought to make their Charity ſo invincible, that they may remain faithfull in their duty to God even till death, ſo that neither the weakneſs of nature, the Tediouſneſs of Mortification, nor contrary Examples; nor even the Scandals with which they are ſomtimes furrounded, may be able to shake their faith & Love; thereby imitating the generoſity of the great Apoſtle, who gave a defiance to all Creatures, and ſaid without fear of miſtake. *I am ſure that neither death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things Preſent, nor to Come, nor Force, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, can be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Rom. 8. 38. 39.

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What mighty things should we not undertake to attain to perfection, if our hearts were thus disposed! for as Love is of the Nature of a Flame, which is in continual motion, we should not even yield to those Great Saints, who have done and suffered such Admirable things to testifiie how much they Loved our Sovereigne Lord. it was the fervour of this Love which made all S. Augustin's Children, be once, what some are still; that is so perfect in all sorts of Vertues. It was that love which made the Canon Regulars so far extend the interpretation they had given to the Rule; as to spend great part of the night as well as of the day, in fervorours singing the praises of Almighty God; fasting more than half the year, and always observing an exact abstenance, working all in common, and living in a retreat which had separated their whole lives from the world, if the Divine

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Orders, had not ſent them out again for ſome holy Miniſtry. Thoſe Admirable men found nothing hard in ſo ſtrict a life, becauſe their love was great; for 'tis the property of that vertue to ſweeten pains and difficulties: they that love perfectly, do not ſuffer, or if they do, it is a pleaſing pain, in which they take delight.

Coldneſs of Charity has been the cauſe of the weakening and decay of the moſt holy Religious houſes. However exceſſive our fore Fathers auſterities may appear to us, they ſeemed ſweet and light to them becauſe of the love they had for Almighty God, and we should do no leſs than they, if we had but as much of the divine love. We may judge of this by what we dayly ſee in ſo many ſecular people who ſpend their lives without complaint, in a ſtate which would be to them as inſupporta-

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ble as death, if they were not ſuſtained by the love they have for temporal gain, which comforts them in all hard occurences. For example, how many do we ſee who live in houſes without Garden, with but little light, and ſcarce any air; who make no viſits, inform themſelves of nothing that paſſes among people of a different profeſſion, and who nevertheleſs count ſuch a ſolitude but a ſmal matter, becauſe they are fixt to ſome occupation which pleaſes or inriches them? how many do we ſee ſubjected to the Grandees of the world, who are tyed to perpetual conſtraints, and compliances much more inſupportable than any Religious Mortification? they feel the pain of their condition, yet conſume their days in it, becauſe they think to advance their fortune that way. How many ambitions men force ſleep from their eyes, roul a thouſand vain projects

jects in their heads; yet do not hope that God will account for their watchings? how many Gameſtres debarr themſelves in a manner of all the conveniences of life, and expoſe themſelves to the danger of the greateſt Poverty, by hazarding all they have; without letting the apprehenſion of a threatening neceſſity, make them manage for the future.

What life more expoſed to death than war, yet it never enters the minds of thoſe who are engaged in it, that they go too far in the Services they pay to their Temporal Princes.

The world is full of ſuch People who often do harder things to ſatisfie ſenſuality, than Charity makes the Saints do to pleaſe God, and that without moderating their exceſs for thoſe fine reaſons, that the world decreaſes, bodies grow weaker, and men cannot do now

what they could have done heretofore.

Now Charity wich is the love of a true Good, has ſtill more force upon ſouls that are penetrated with it, than ſelf Love has. Charity is more generous than ſenſuality to undertake great enterpriſes, she is more conſtant to keep up in corporal pains, she is mote ingenious to ſucceed in her deſigns; and when we find our ſelves ſo far from ye holy practices and auſtere lives of our Anceſtors, we muſt not lay the fault of our remiſsneſs upon things that are not the cauſe, nor accuſe neither the corruption of the times, the want of health, nor the Auſterity of Rules, but blame our own fainthearteneſs, and the little love we have for God.

If we had but once open'd our hearts to this Diviue vertue, far from relaxing by an unhappy decay, we should in a little time get up again

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to a perfect ſtate : for as Perſons poſſeſt by ſome Paſſion, always find a thouſand pretences, and never Miſs occaſions when offer'd to ſatisfie themſelves when they think it allowable ; ſo we ſhould do the ſame in regard of Chriſtian and Religious vertues, we ſhould find more reaſons to encreaſe watching, Faſting, Prayers, and Labours, than tepidity now ſuggeſts to make us excuſe our ſelves from them : and we ſhould be more ingenious to diſcover the means to tend to, and riſe to a high perfection, than we are now to forge falſe Reaſons to flatter our ſelves in our weakneſs. But becauſe the Charity of many is grown cold, and they are no more ſuſtained, the vertues moſt eſſential to our ſtate are almoſt become inſupportable to our nature, which by its own corruption is already drawn to a very different way of acting.

Not drawn by this holy motive.

From this proceeds the relaxation

introduced into Many Religious houſes, which have ſtood in need of reformation: they firſt cut off manual works imagining none healthy enough to go through with that labour; then work being taken away which uſed to employ ſo many hours, they found by experience that few had heads ſtrong enough to beſtow regularly in reading and ſtudying holy books, all the time that remained after the Divine Office; therefore recreations were introduced, as an indiſpenſable ſolace; of which many make a point of Rule, contrary to ancient practice, and unknown to all religious tradition. That facility they allowed themſelves of breaking ſilence by particular and uprofitable entertainments, took place of the conferences ſo very advantagious both for piety and learning. And would to God they had ſtop'd there, but alas! too Soon it was found that Religious men paſſed further yet: the

they were Soon tired with recreations always in the ſame place, and with the ſame company, and brought up the cuſtome of going a broad to recreate with ſeculars, and by a diſguſt to the very exerciſes in which their Ancients found ſuch ſacred charmes, they are again engaged in the world, which they had once renounced, and are fallen into the misfortune which the Prophet bewails when he ſays in his Lamentations. *How is the gold darkened, the beſt colour changed?* Jerem Lamen. 4. 1.

It is to avoid falling into the like misfortune that we find this Preface in the front of S. Auguſtin's Rule. It is short indeed as to the words, but fruitful as to inſtructions, for it commands us to love God above all things; that is to ſay in plain terms, if you have not perfect Charity, however ſweet this Rule may be, it will ſeem an inſupportable burden to you, but if you have this

this Charity, and if you Love God preferably to all things, you will find all in it moſt ſweet and light: you will even have no need of a Rule, becauſe you will of your ſelf do more than can be preſcribed by it, and you will find in the bottom of your hearts an abundant ſource of all ſort of good works. When the Holy Scripture ſays. *That the law is not made for the juſt, but for the injuſt.* 1. Tim. 1. 9. That is not to ſay that the juſt are not obliged to practice the ſame vertues, and to abſtain from the ſame vices, as others are, but that they are ſo bent of themſelves to do good and avoid evill, that if there was no law which ordained the other, they would not omit to live according to juſtice by the ſole motive of Charity.

† The one and forbid.

Reflect what precautions muſt be uſed wth a man that has loſt his wits, what ſubjections! what Barricades

cades, what vigilance to keep him from breaking his neck, falling into the fire, or otherways hurting himſelf or others: but when the ſame man is come to his right ſenſes again, all that is no more neceſſary: thoſe Barriers are taken away, and he is left at Liberty to do what he pleaſes: not that he is then allow'd to kill himſelf or do miſchief to others; but then reaſon alone ſecures him better from thoſe dangers, than all the ſubjections he was before reduced to. O Divine Charity! which may juſtly be call'd the good ſenſe and reaſon of man! this is the caſe, ſince thoſe that have you not, are treated in Scripture as ſenſeleſs creatures, and thoſe who die without you will eternally accuſe themſelves of folly!

Thoſe who want this vertue, are in a deplorable condition, and have need of an infinitude of laws. They muſt have commands or prohibitions for

for each action of their lives. One ſuperior is not ſufficient for them! for however attentive he be to obſerve their behaviour, they will ſtill find means to over reach him. But as Soon as Charity is diffuſed into their hearts by the holy ſpirit that is given them; they preſently enter into the Liberty of the children of God, they are no more in ſervitude; and one may ſay with S. Paul, that the law is not made for them.

We muſt ſay of the love of God what Soloman ſays of wiſdome, *all Good things comes together with her.* Wiſd. 7. 11. That is to ſay all the vertues. As Soon as we Love God we become chaſte, keeping off all that may ſoil the purity not only of body but of mind alſo. We become moderate in our meals to keep the ſoul in a condition to apply her ſelf always to God: we become wary in our words that we may ſay nothing to diſpleaſe his Divine Majeſty: We be-

become zealous to Labour for the advancement of his Glory: we become wiſe to take always the beſt advice in occurring difficulties: we become clear ſighted to diſcover all the ſnares of the devil: in short we are ſtrong, conſtant, patient, & do more without compariſon for the Love of Juſtice, than we did before for fear of punishment.

In this appears the excellency of S. Auguſtin's Rule, which does not tend ſo much to preſcribe orders for each kind of vertue, as other Rules do: but to inſpire Charity which embraces them all, and cauſes them to be practiced in perfection. It ſeems to ſpeak but ſlightly of the chief exerciſes which should frame the whole body of our life. It neither determines what number of pſalms muſt be ſung, nor what time ought to be ſpent in prayer; it appoints neither the hours for, nor quality of work: it ſeems to leave faſ-

faſting to every ones diſcretion, that they may practice it according to the knowledg they have of their infirmity or ſtrength: it does not declare neither, what books we ought to apply our ſelves to.

But this ſeeming indetermination ought not to ſerve us for a pretext to live more remiſsly; on the contrary we are thereby to know with what perfection our holy Inſtitutor deſires we should comply with all thoſe different duties. For in leaving all things to the conduct of charity, which goes directly to God without ſeeking proper ſatisfaction, or ſelf intereſt, expreſsly ordering that this vertue be always uppermoſt, he declars to us, that we are only faithfull to his Rule, as much as renouncing our ſelves in all things, we ſeek nothing in it, but the Greater Glory of God, and the means to render our ſelves more pleaſing in his Sight. O Charity! Charity which

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in God is God himſelf, enlighten then our minds, burn our hearts, purifie our bodies, and poſſeeſs us entirely. O Divine Love! deſtroy in us all that diſpleaſes you, overthrow all the obſtacles we put to your grace, ſtop the unhappy ſource of our evil deſires, pour a wholeſome bitterneſs upon the uſe of the creatures which divert us from perfection, and make us find in your Croſs that unction and that ſweetneſs, which have made it ſo amiable to your Saints!

§. 2. *And then our neighbour*

The utility of the Goſpel does not preciſely conſiſt in giving us a knowledge of what we owe to our neighbour, but in having imprinted the love of him in our heart: for it is an admirable thing to ſee what lights many of the Pagans have had concerning thoſe duties, tho' they

they were entirely deprived of charity. Seneca one of their wiſe men ſays „ It is very agreable to do „ Good to ones Friends, but nothing ſo Glorious as to do the „ ſame for thoſe who have no kindneſs for us. The vertuous man has „ much more honour and joy practiceing vertue upon hard ſubjects, „ than in eaſy matters. It is a brave „ exerciſe to attack the heart of his „ enemy, not with ſword in hand, „ but with careſſes and Benefits; to „ have innocent combats with him „ by Teſtimonies of Love; to ſurround him with Officious Services, Like a Rebellious town encompaſs'd with an army to force „ it to ſurrender. There is much „ more pleaſure, continues this Phyloſopher, in making a Friend of „ an ill wisher, than in keeping the „ Friendſhip of a Perſon who wishes us well: in a word, to oblige a Friend is to act like a ra-

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„ tional man; but to do any thing
„ for the ungratefull is to act like
„ a God.

Yet after all, thoſe who held theſe fine Arguments, loved their Neighbour no more than they loved God, ſince they had not Charity, without which neither God nor man can be Truly Loved: for whereas this vertue in its proper Acts ſeeks not its own intereſt, but that of others, thoſe Pagans on the contrary, ſought themſelves in the good they did to others; their own Glory was the end either of the aſſiſtance they gave, or of the Pardon they granted, and what more oppoſite to Charity?, but what the Goſpel does, is to inſinuate this vertue into the hearts of men, which before was only in their imagination; to enlarge the heart which till then had been ſtreighten'd, and as it had contained nothing but ſelf Love, to introduce

duce the love of God, and of our Neighbour. We ſee alſo the Saviour of the world always taken up with the deſign to imprint this vertue in our hearts: he loſt no occaſion of repreſenting the neceſſity of it: he uſed all means to inſinuate it into the hearts of his Auditors: all he did for the Glory of his Father, and to move us to love him, was mingled with words, Actions, and Circumſtances, which at the ſame time invites us to fraternal Charity.

If the Doctors and Phariſees addreſs to him, to know which is the greateſt commandment of the law, as Soon as he has anſwered that it is, to love God with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our ſtrength; he preſently paſſes to that we are ſpeaking of, though they did not ask him about it, and ſays, there is a ſecond commandment like to the firſt,

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which is, *to Love our Neighbour as our ſelves.* Matt. 22. 37.

When he inſtitutes the Adorable Sacrament of the new alliance; he does not take the flesh of animals, nor yet their Blood; tho' ſo proper to repreſent a Sacrifice; but he makes uſe of bread and wine which are the ſimboles of Charity, thereby to teach us, that, as to make the Bread which is to be changed into his body, and the wine, which is to be changed into his Blood, there muſt be many grains amals'd & mixt together; ſo to enter into his alliance, to be incorporated into his miſtical body, and become but one and the ſame Spirit with him, Chriſtians muſt be united together by the bond of a ſincere Charity, according to S. Pauls moral, *becauſe we who are many are one bread, one body, and all of us partake of one bread.* 1. Cor. 10. 17.

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When he gives to his Disciples a mark by which all the world may know them, he does not take any of the other vertues, for which he has given them either precepts, or counsells, or examples; he dos' not give them for a distinctive Character neither chastity, nor fasting, nor prayer, but fraternal Charity. *By this all men shall know that you are my Disciples, if you have love one for another* John. 13. 35.

When he is ready to leave the world, and declares his last will to his eternal Father in that Admirable Prayer which concludes the Sermon after the last supper, he thinks of settling Charity amongst Christians, and asks it in this manner. *Nor do I pray for my Disciples only, but for those also, who by their word shall believe in me; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee,*

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that they also may be one in us. Jo. 17. 20. 21.

In fine, when he is ascended the heavens and sends his holy spirit upon earth, the strength of that new comforter does not only consist in causing the hearts of the faithfull to burn with the fire of Divine Love; but he also unites them all together in so perfect a manner, *that all those who believed were also together, and had all things in common.* Acts 2. 44. For they were but one heart and one soul, and none consider'd what he possest as his own in particular.

Nevertheless those who have a great deal of self love cannot relish the commandment which obliges to the practice of this vertue, nor yet conceive the justice of it: they consider the obligation of loving their neighbour as an insupportable yoak, when they expect no particular advantage by it; and

the world is full of people, who being ſenſible to the quick, and in a heat for the ſmaleſt things, which regard themſelves, yet are hard and uncompaſſionate in all that concerns their Neighbour. Would to God there were never any ſuch to be found in regular communities, but alas! there is but too many, who are exceſſively vext, when any little thing is wanting or incommodious to them, yet are cold as ice when they are to aſſiſt their Neighbour, or Labour for the common good. In the mean time the precept which obliges us to Love our Neighbour as our ſelves is of an abſolute importance for ſalvation, and was given as a certain mark to know if we Truly Love God. For on the one ſide, God is inviſible and his intereſt entirely ſpiritual ſo on the other ſide we are extremely lumpish and ſenſible as to what regards our conveniences and our ſelf Love;

we do not eaſily perceive the occaſions that are offered us to diſcharge our duties to that Sovereign Majeſty, which are to Love him, to ſerve him, and to ſuffer by him, and for him: and therefore unjuſtly flattering our ſelves that we have a Charity, which we have not, that we are in ſentiments which we never give proofs of, we ſpend our lives wthout performing theſe important duties, for which notwithſtanding we were placed in this world.

For this reaſon then, God has Obliged us to have Charity for our Neighbour; on this account he holds as done to himſelf what we do to our Neighbour, either good or bad; that as their intereſt is often found in agitation when we ſeek our own; as we daily ſee and meet with themſelves when we think of nothing but our own buſineſs, we may be advertiſed, and, as one may ſay, forced to Give Almighty God proofs

of the Love we bear him, by that we expreſs to our Neighbour. For Saint John ſays, *he that loveth not his brother whom he ſeeth, how can he Love God whom he ſeeth not?* 1. Jo. 4. 20. If you cannot agree with thoſe who are of the ſame nature with you, if you are always thwarting thoſe who are like your ſelf, how can it be thought that you will be united with him who is more different from you than heaven is from earth, and ſtill more oppoſite to you in inclination and conduct? if you will not ſerve your Neighbour who ſtands in need of you, † render to God who neither wants you nor your goods? if you cannot bear a hard word from your Neighbour, how will you have patience when God ſhall Croſs you in all you Love, when he ſhall afflict you with long ſickneſs, excite Slanderers againſt you, and render you deſpicable in the eyes of thoſe whoſe

† What ſervice will you.

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eſteem you ſeek? we muſt then Love our Neighbour to exert our Love for God, and whoſoever should pretend to the contrary, need but take to himſelf what S. John ſays. *He that ſays he knoweth God and keepeth not his commandements, is a liar.* 1. Jo. 2. 4.

Beſides how can we hope that God will put us in the rank of his friends when we are not of thoſe whom he honours with that quality? does not nature it ſelf teach us that thoſe who injure the perſons we Love, injure us alſo? when we have a friend we wish that no body may disoblige him; but on the contrary that all should conſider him: what is done to him, we take as done to our ſelves: we eagerly take his part when any one ſpeaks againſt him: we delight to hear him well ſpoken of, and if our friendship is great we are ready to break with all the world to advance his intereſt.

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It is, as if we said to the rest of mankind; I Love no body but as much as he considers my friends, and have an aversion to all that hate him. By this I ought to acknowledge how justly Almighty God exacts my conserving Charity with my Neighbour. I am not allow'd to doubt of the Love he bears them, no more than to mistrust that he has for me. He is our common father: I know he dyed for them as well as for me: he designes both them and me for Eternal Glory: I ought to confide in his goodness as much for the one as for the other. I ought then to Love them, or God will look upon me as his enemy: nay tho' at present they should be wicked I must bear with them as his Divine Majesty does, who will have none of my heart if he sees in it contempt or aversion for those he treats as his friends and children.

The least faults against fraternal Cha-

Charity ought to be extreamly dreaded, ſince almighty God reckons them as done againſt himſelf, and often when we think we have only ſeparated our ſelves from one of our company, we are dreadfully abandoned by God. When one branch of a tree is cut of and divided from another to which it was joyned, that branch not only loſes the correſpondance it had with the other to which it was faſtened, but at the ſame time it loſes the correſpondance it had with all the others, and has no more communication with any; it is even ſeparated from the ſtock, holds no more to the trunk of the tree which gives ſubſiſtance to the reſt; it receives nothing more from the root, gets no more moiſture from the earth, which gave it life; and one may ſay that heaven does no more pour down the ſame influences upon it. Thus it is with us in relation to the Charity

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we ought to have for our Neighbour, when we ſeparate our ſelves from any one of them by ſentiments of averſion, we muſt not imagin that we loſe but one only; that loſs might be eaſily repaired: but we loſe them all at the ſame time: we cut our ſelves off from the Society and communion of the whole community. This want of Charity makes us loſe the union we had with all the Saints, as well thoſe in heaven as thoſe upon earth: we are ſeparated from Jeſus Chriſt himſelf who is the root of both; ſince they are all grafted upon him: the earth becomes like braſs to us, becauſe we do not draw any advantage from the Sacraments which are received in the boſome of the church: heaven it ſelf is as hard as iron to us, becauſe not any grace deſcends from thence into our ſouls; and as long as this averſion ſhall laſt for one only Perſon, tho' the leaſt of all,

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we shall never have any share with God.

But proportionably as this diviſion is hurtfull to us, the Love of our Neighbour is of contrary profit: for the Charity which we maintain with him, is a treaſure that enriches us with all ſorts of graces. By Charity we are united to Almighty God, that is to ſay his Divine Majeſty remains in us, and we in him: by it we fulfill all the law according to S. Paul: by it we maintain the life of our ſouls, which is the holy Ghoſt. Do we want graces? Charity to our Neighbour is an abundant ſource thereof, becauſe our ſaviour has ſaid. *Give, and it ſhall be given to you.* Luk. 6. 38. Do we want to be freed from our ſins? it is Charity which procures us that ineſtimable advantage, becauſe he to whom it belongs to remit them, has ſaid, *forgive, and you ſhall be forgiven*, 6. 37. and generally ſpeaking, we

we may and we ought to expect to be measured and treated, as we shall have measured and treated others *Ibid.* 6. 38.

Moreover this Charity is so admirably excellent that it gives us a share of all the merits and of all the good works of our community, so that we thereby even profit by our Neighbour's Goods. And this is effected when we rejoyce for their welfare, or for the vertue wee see in them, or for the favours Almighty God grants them, for those advantages thus becomes our own in some sort. Since S. Paul says of corporal Charity, *let your abundance supply their want, that there may be an equality.* 2. Cor. 8. 14. So in Spiritual Charity the abundance of the one supplys the want of the other, in such sort that he who has less vertue, rejoycing at the happyness of him who has more, makes his brother's goods his own, as if he possest them himself.

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It is alſo the Doctrine of S. Auguſtin, that if he who cannot faſt, approves and rejoyces in the vertue of faſting which he ſees in another, he partakes of the merit of that others faſt. That he who cannot ſpend much time in prayer, but rejoyces to ſee others fervent and aſſiduous in that holy exerciſe, Glorifying God for the ſame as if he had himſelf received that grace, he has a conſiderable share in theſe prayers; and the like in other vertues. The reaſon of this is not hard to be comprehended: for if concupiſcence has ſuch an unhappy efficacy as to extend the ſin of him who has committed it, upon the ſoul of another who only conſented to it, as S. Paul ſays, *not only they who commit criminal Actions, but they alſo who conſeut to them, deſerve death.* Rom. 1. 32. Why should Charity have leſs force to make the merit of the vertues practiced by ſome, paſs into the ſouls

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of others who rejoyce in them, and Glorifie Almighty God for the ſame?

But to enjoy ſo great a bleſſing, is it not juſt it ſhould coſt us ſomthing? and ſince we get ſuch great advantage by this vertue, is it not reaſonable that we bear with patience and meekneſs the little bitterneſſes that attend it? there is always ſomthing to be ſuffered from one another, when many live together: and we ought for Charity's ſake to ſupport our Neighbour's weakneſſes, as well thoſe of body as thoſe of the mind; endeavouring to ſupply for the one, and to forgive the other, bearing with one another by a reciprocal goodneſs.

S. Auguſtin explicating this precept of the great Apoſtle S. Paul. *Bear one auother's burthens, aud ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.* Gal. 6. 2. Brings a compariſon of Deers: thoſe beaſtts, ſays he, aiming to ſwim to

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certain Ilands where there is plentifull paſture, and it being hard for them to Croſs ſo wide a water; becauſe of their weighty horns which charge their heads, they go in a row, each reſting his head upon the hinder part of him that goes before: and when the foremoſt which has not had that ſolace, feels his ſtrength begins to fail, he leaves his place and goes the laſt, that he may be ſupported in his turn. Theſe animals, ſays S. Auguſtin, fulfill the Apoſtles command to the letter, by bearing one another's hurthen; and thus they arrive to the fertile places they aim'd at, and not one is loſt, becauſe there's a kind of Charity amongſt them which ſerves them as well as a ferry boat.

It would ſeem an affront to men to exhort them to vertue by the example of beaſts, if the holy Scripture had not taught us the way

way, by ſending the ſluggard to the Schoole of the Ant, to learn wiſdome. Yet if any miſlike it, they may be eaſily excuſed that difficulty, provided they profit by the ſo preſſing and admirable Examples that our ſaviour himſelf has given us, to teach us to love, to ſupport, and to Pardon our Neighbour. But is it not a deplorable thing to ſee, that, though the Lord of the univerſe has ſo far exerted his Love for men as to receive with an infinit meekneſs the calumnies and perſecutions of his enemies; to ſuffer ſo long with an unconceivable patience the companv of the Perfidious Apoſtle who was to betray him, to keep a profound ſilenc before the Judge who condemn'd him thô convinced of his innocence; and to pray for his murderes with an infinit goodneſs, at the time they overwhelm'd him with torments and infamy: and

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yet men who make profeſſion of being his Diſciples, men who know that they cannot be ſaved without following the ſteps of this excellent Guide, have nevertheleſs ſo much difficulty to live in peace with their Neighbour or to ſuffer ſomthing to conſerve Charity?

What admirable Matter does not the Example of a God, dying a death ſo Cruel, and ſo infamous, by the hands of his creatures, furnish me with, to treat of the Love we ought to have even for our enemies, if I were to ſpeak of that ſubject, and was not confined to the narrow limits I have preſcribed my ſelf! that Love is indeed the Maſter piece of Charity to our Neighbour, yet I do not inſiſt upon it, not only for the reaſon I have alledged, but alſo for another ſtill more forcible, which is, that having learn'd of a father of the church that the Chriſtian has

no enemy, I ought much leſs to ſuppoſe that Perſons engaged in the perfection of Chriſtianity can look upon any as ſuch, becauſe they are troubleſome, or even outragious to them.

§ 3. *For theſe are principal Precepts deliver'd to us in Holy Scripture.*

This expreſſion is too clear to admit of a doubt whether ſome precepts are more important than others, or whether the Rules and laws a Perſon may be engaged in, equally oblige to the practice of what they preſcride; and if there is more or leſs harm in pretending to get diſpenſations from them according to their different degrees of force and vigour. The diſcerning this diſtinction, is of very great conſequence; we cannot be too vigilantly carefull to avoid

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miſtakes in it ; and one may alſo ſay, that it is one of the points of a Religious Life, nay of the Chriſtian Life, which is moſt neceſſary to be inſtructed and enlightened in. For to ſet all the precepts in the ſame rank, and to pretend that all may be diſpenſed with, or never any, is an errour which may become the cauſe of great miſchief, and it cannot be too Soon cleared, for thoſe who would embrace an exact Life, and labour for the ſecurity of their Conſcience.

To lay open this important matter then, in favour of beginners, and to give them occaſſion to procure better inſtructions from the Perſons Almighty God has placed over them; we muſt remark that thoſe two precepts of the Love of God and of our Neighbour, which are at the begining of our Rule, are of the number of thoſe

which can never admit of a diſpenſation, and therefore the Rule declares that they are recommanded to us as principal precepts, and the greateſt of all the law.

In effect, God himſelf cannot excuſe us from Loving him, becauſe that love is an eſſential duty of the creature to its Creator; becauſe ſuch a diſpenſation would be oppoſite to the natural law, and to the Divine Juſtice; and becauſe men and Angels are as much forbidden to refuſe Almighty God their acknowledgment and their Love, as it is impoſſible for them to ſhake off their dependency. And as for the Love of our Neighbour, there is ſo much reſemblance between this ſecond commandment and the firſt, that there will never be neither occaſion nor pretext of ſo great importance as to allow us to fail in the Charity due to him, as I think I have already ſufficiently made appear.

pear. Indeed at the end of the world when Jeſus Chriſt shall have declared thoſe that he will himſelf hate, and shall have caſt them from his preſence; then we shall be permited alſo to break with them; and to look upon them with the ſame contempt and hatred that his Divine Majeſty shall shew for thoſe miſerable wretches. But in the preſent time, when all is in ſuſpenſe and undecided, in this world where God makes the ſun riſe equally upon the good and bad, whilſt he will not let his Angels pluck up the cockle from his field, tho' they know it; nothing excuſes us from loving our Neighbour, and we cannot omit this duty under any pretence of injury, or ill uſage received from them. Now as all the other articles of the law of God are neceſſary conſequences and followers of theſe two firſt, and that we cannot break them without directly offending either God or our

Neighbour; it is evident that they admit of no diſpenſation neither, and that it would be, invain for men to pretend to give it.

As for the precepts which have been given us by men, ſuch as are the Rules appointed by the holy founders of orders, we muſt ſay of S. Auguſtin's Rule, what S. Bernard ſaid of S. Benedict's, that it is propoſed to all, but impoſed upon none: that it is advatagious to thoſe who engage in it by a Spirit of Piety, and who being ſo engaged, remain faithfull in the practice of what it ordains; but that it brings no harm to thoſe who do not embrace it. Now that which is purely voluntary in regard of thoſe who do but offer themſelves, becomes neceſſary to thoſe who have once made their profeſſion; and theſe laſt ought to practice by a ſtrict obligation the Rules they have ſubmitted to by a will entirely free: becauſe it is what

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a Perſon ought to expect who has once made her vows; ſuch an one is to be juſtified or condemn'd by her own words. Yet happy, a thouſand times happy is that neceſſity which engages us to that which is the beſt and moſt perfect!

Therefore, except the precetps S. Auguſtin gives us in his Rule concerning Charity, Humility, and the other vertues, which are rather inſtituted by Allmighty God than by the Saint, and by coſequence admit of no change; the thought we ought to have as to the reſt of the Rule is that the things preſcribed are indeed but advertiſments and counſels for thoſe who are not profeſs'd to them; but that they become precepts as to thoſe who have engaged themſelves in them, and are matters of ſin if they violate them: or to expreſs the matter in fewer words, theſe practices are free to the one and neceſſary to the other; provided

ded this neceſſity be ſo underſtood as not to count reaſonable and neceſſary diſpenſations, violations of them.

Here we muſt remark that when S. Bernard (of whom I have borrow'd this) declares that the Rules that we have from men, however holy they have been, may ſomtimes admit of diſpenſations; he alſo explains the caſe, and only means when neceſſity or reaſon requires it, and does not allow particulars to diſpenſe with themſelves, but refers it to ſuperiours who by a Canonical Election ſupply the place of the holy inſtitutors. This is what all thoſe who would act with ſome ſecurity of Conſcience ought to have always in view that they may not be miſtaken: ſo that if in particular occaſions any think they cannot comply with an article of the Rule, they ought not to reſolve to paſs it over by their own motion, but ſupport their conduct

duct by the will of their ſuperiour, as well as by the neceſſity and reaſons they think they have : and if any one of theſe Conditions are wanting, their caſe does not ſeem ſecure. As ſuperiours are the diſpenſers, they ought to be judges of the diſpenſations: but they muſt not grant them upon the ſimple requeſt made thereof; becauſe that may happen to be only the effect of a temptation ; nor yet may it be done through an eaſy inconſideratneſs for want of due application to their Miniſtry : the cauſes of the grant muſt be lawfull, demonſtrating either neceſſity or profit , and the ſpirit of the Rule muſt be preſerved entire , even when for a time and for Charity ſake, they do violence to the letter. Otherways their permiſſion is not ſo much a diſpenſation as a diſſipation ; it is an infidelity which burthens their conſcience, and expoſes them to the danger of perishing with thoſe

thoſe who lean upon their indiſcreet facility, and are not for that excuſed from ſin in the ſight of Almighty God.

A diſpenſation, and a toleration are two different things, we muſt take care of confounding them together, there being a conſiderable diſtance between them which few obſerve ſufficiently. A diſpenſation can never light upon things which are ill in themſelves, but only upon thoſe which being indifferent are forbidden or commanded by the Rule for a greater Good; and it is always the effect of a real conſent in the ſuperiour, who judges that in ſuch an occaſion neceſſity or profit ought to take place of what is ordained. A toleration on the contrary is ſomtimes uſed as to evil things and abuſes, when they cannot be hindered without cauſing greater harm. It is purely the ſuperiour's want of power to rectifie

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the evil at that preſent time, and her patience in expecting the occaſions and means to remedy it: and as it never ſuppoſes the ſuperiour's conſent, ſo it never gives ſecurity of conſcience to thoſe who thereby think to shelter themſelves.

This is the ordinary ſubject of affliction for thoſe who have the conduct of ſouls, and who are obliged to maintain Rules in their rigour: they ſee plain enough that a great part of the leaves and diſpenſations which are ask'd of them, are not grounded upon any of the Foundations we have ſuppoſed after S. Bernard, and that far from any conſiderable neceſſity or profit in them, there is not the leaſt appearance of either; and therefore that they ought not to ſuffer what they are preſs'd to grant contrary to the Rules. Neither can they be ignorant that in ſuch occaſions the Perſons who addreſs to them are in temp-

tation, ſince in effect they are tempted either by the ſpirit of ſloth, or by the inclination they have for the world, or by the Love of Liberty, or by a ſentiment of vain Glory, or in short by ſome other ſort of concupiſcence, ſo that to grant them what they ask would be to permit them to ſink under the temptation.

There is no doubt but if ſuperiours had to do with tractable perſons, far from permiting them what would but encreaſe their weakneſs and make them go backward in the way of Salvation; they would Labour to ſuſtain them againſt the Temptation, ſomtimes by repreſenting how much it keeps them off from the perfection of their ſtate, ſomtimes by terrifying them with the remembrance of God's judgments, at other times encouraging them by our ſaviour's examples and the hopes of the celeſtial joys, to bear all the yoak of the

Rule

Rule: finally by refuſing them what they ask and praying for them. But becauſe ſuperiours are ſomtimes obliged to anſwer untractable perſons who yield not to authority, never ſubmit to reaſons, nor are diſcouraged by refuſals; if they ſee that in relation to the time, the Perſons, and the circumſtances of the thing, that the evill they should in vain endeavour to ſtop by ſtronger means would become much greater, it is then, not being able to uſe a profitable violence to others, they do a violence to themſelves which they think neceſſary; and ſo often out of prudence, but ſomtimes thrô weakneſs, they determine to tolerate for a time what they in no ſort approve of, and what they wish with all their heart they could hinder.

Now the ſuperiours who thus uſe the toleration, muſt not ceaſe to blame the evil and to declare openly that they diſapprove it, for fear to

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great a ſilence be taken for conſent, and they become accomplices and guilty of the evil that others comitt. They ought alſo to be continually upon the watch that they may not let ſlip the favorable times and means that Almighty God shall offer them to work at the reeſtablishment of order: and when they ſee no appearance of ſucceeding therein, to practice the advice that S. Gregory gives to all Paſtors; that is, to wash with their tears the ſins of their people which they cannot correct. In fine the toleration ought only to be a ſuffering of leſſer evils thrô a juſt fear of greater which would evidently follow, and not a diſſembling of greater thrô a vain apprehenſion of ſome leſſer which might happen; for fear of being condemn'd with the remiſs and timorous who will be one day caſt with the greateſt ſinners into the lake of fire and briſtome whih

is the ſecond death.

How much then do thoſe perſons deceive themſelves who ſo eaſily tranſgreſs certain articles of their Rule, and unfaithfully leave a part of their obligations without other authority for that liberty, but certain permiſſions extorded by force of importunities, or gain'd by addreſs? as thoſe permiſſions are not marks of their ſuperiour's approbation; but only that they yield to their weakneſs, and are overcome by the heardneſs of their heart, which is eaſily ſeen by the manner of the grant, the difficulty to obtain, and the uneaſyneſles of the ſuperiours about it; ſo ſuch leaves ought not to paſs for real diſpenſations, but for ſimple tolerations which is no ſecurity of conſcience for thoſe who ſo boldly uſe them. The beſt way then would be to repreſent our wants to our ſuperiours with ſo great a ſimplicity

that they may be entirely at liberty to act according to their own ſenſe and wisdome: and then their determination would be to the inferiours a ſource of peace infinitly more comfortable than the ſo short ſweetneſs of following their own inordinate appetites.

But not to engage my ſelf farther in ſo unexhauſtible and profound a matter, I will conclude by declaring that whatever Idea may be framed of diſpenſations, thoſe who give them, and thoſe who receive them would be happy if they could always obſerve three things.

Firſt that the diſpenſation never reaches to all the Rule at once, ſo that thoſe who ought to practice it live to themſelves as if they had not any Rule to follow; traſgreſſing with an equal and entire liberty the laws of ſilence, of retirement, of abſtenance, of prayer, of ſubmiting to be at certain hours,

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and in certain places for the practices of piety, and the like. For 'tis plain to be seen that persons who thus should excuse themselves from all their obligations when they have sufficient health to comply with them, would not act so, if they did not abandon themselves to dissipation of mind, and to indocility of heart. Snch are in danger of leaving their state, since they forsake the means to which Almighty God has fixt their sanctification, and thus they expose themselves to an inevitable ruin.

The second is, that the dispensation when it only regards some particular article of the Rule, that it be not absolutely for always; but only last as long as the solide reasons subsist which caused its admittance. And by consequence, those who give, and those who receive such dispensations, because they think it cannot be otherways,

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ought nevertheleſs always to love the Rule, conſerve the ſpirit of it, to deſire it may be fulfill'd, to lament and deplore interiourly the neceſſity they are in as often as they do any thing againſt the Rule thô with diſpenſation: they ought alſo to keep off thoſe occaſions as much as they can, think themſelves always in a ſtate of violence, and ſeek as much as in them lyes the means to return to the exact obſervance of the Rule.

Finally the third is, that when the diſpenſation is only for certain parts of the Rule, and for a limited time, that it extend not to every one, nor ſtand as a law which comprehends and ſubjects even thoſe who have ſtrength enough to comply faithfully with all their duties, and are moved by Almighty to ſeek the greateſt perfection. One of the miſchiefs which have moſt contributed to the wea-

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kening of Piety and Juſtice in all States, is the ſeting diſpenſations above laws; giving more force to cuſtome than to Rule; ceaſing to follow the tracts of the Saints who have gone before, to keep company with perſons of the preſent time even in their irregularites: and under pretence of uniformity in communities, thoſe whom the Love of God moved to the eminent ways of perfection are forced to deſcend, inſtead of lifting up thoſe whom ſelf Love has cauſed to walk in the low ways of relaxation.

This is a ſmall part of the reflexions which may be made upon the obedience due to Rules in general, and which I have made upon the Preface of Saint Auguſtin's Rule, for fear that unfervorous ſouls underſtanding that there are precepts which have been given us as the *principal* and *greateſt*, should make little account of the reſt. It

is now time to hear what Hugh of S. Victor will say to us concerning the precepts contain'd in the whole body of this admirable Rule. No body was more capable than this great man, of expounding and discovering to us the true sence of it, since he was so replenish'd with the doctrine and spirit of his holy Institutor that he pass'd for the Augustin of his age, and says nothing in his whole work which he did not practice even to his death.

Hugh of S. Victor was a Saxon by Nation, and Born of Noble Rich Parents: from his most tender youth he had so strong an inclination, and such an admirable facility for Sciences, that at an age when reason scarce begins to appear, he sought instruction, and study'd the truth in things which others employed only for their diversion. At eighten years old he projected the designe of renouncing all that he might con-

conſecrate himſelf to Jeſus Chriſt, ſolidly judging that whatever knowledge he might acquire he should always walk in darkneſs whilſt he did not inviolably follow him who is the light of the world. He drew to his ſentiments his uncle, who was Arch-deacon of the Church of Halberſtad, and very rich: ſo both together they left their country; and as the Abby of S. Victor at Paris was then in great renown for the fervour and Sanctity of its Canon Regulars, they entered there in the year 1115. Hugh in proceſs of time taught Divinity, with an univerſal applauſe and incredible profit. Several great men went out of his ſchoole to the firſt places of the church, and that to the great benefit of it, by communicating to others the lights they had borrow'd of him.

This excellant Maſter teaching the truth to his Diſciples forgot nothing to ſettle himſelf in the moſt perfect

vertue. By his fidelity to the obſervances of his Rule, and by his aſſiduity in prayer, he acquired ſo great an experience in the ſpiritual life, that none ſurpaſſed him even amongſt thoſe who had but that only occupation. Infine tho' he had loved Almighty God from his tender youth, his life was a continual penance, and he finish'd both at the age of forty four years, by a moſt holy death, in a livly faith, and tranſports of love towards the moſt Bd. Sacrament of the Altar. There are other things more particular, which might be ſaid of him, and which I would not omit if I undertook to make his Elogium; but my deſign here is only to give his expoſition of the great S. Auguſtin's Rule.

The

THE EXPOSITION OF S. AUGUSTINS RULE

The First Chapter

Of unity and living without Propriety.

THe precepts we undertake to expound in the ſequel of this work, bear the name of Rule, becauſe they offer us the compleat model of a moſt holy, and moſt perfect life. And the Rule is ſo calld becauſe it gives us documents conformable to the verity which is the ſoverigne righteouſneſs: and conducts us thereunto without ſuffring us to ramble either

either to the right or left hand, by any irregularity. What is calld Rule in our tongue, is the ſame thing that the greeks call Canon and it is from them that the word Canon takes its original, it ſignifys regular, and it is the name communely given to thoſe who dwelling in Monaſtrys, live there in a Canonical and Apoſtolical manner, conforming their manners as much as poſſible, to the precepts which have been given us by the holy fathers. Now it is to ſuch Perſons that S. Auguſtin addreſſes the enſuing words.

§ *I. We commaud all who are ſettled in the Monaſtery, to obſerve theſe things following.*

He enters at firſt dash into matter, and shews the reaſon why theſe excellent precepts are read to us, which is, to the end that by that lecture we may have an entire knowledge of them; and that our mind being ever occupy'd with the ſame, we

we may practice them with an inviolable fidelity. Nay we are obliged to it, to avoid the effect of that dreadfull ſentence pronounced by God himſelf. *That ſervant who hath known the will of his Lord, and hath not prepared, nor done according to his will shal be beaten with many ſtripes.* Luk. 12. 47. And of that other dictated by S. Paul. *Not the hearers of the law are juſt before God, but the doers of the law shall be juſtified.* Rom. 2. 13. Let us then be attentive to the orders of a Maſter whoſe goodneſs is ſo great that he exacts nothing of us but what he knows to be moſt for our advantage: and let us *be mindfull of his commandments to do them.* Pſal. 102. 18. Becauſe according to the Apoſtle S. James. *He that looketh into the perfect law of liberty and hath continued in it, becoming not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work; this man shall be happy in his deed.* Jam. 1. 25. Or as our

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ſaviour himſelf ſays in the Goſel, *bleſſed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.* Luk. 11. 28. Let us then harken once again, but with an attention full of reſpect, to the things which are commanded us, and which we cannot doubt being addreſs'd to us, ſince we are the perſons ſettled in the Monaſtery.

§ 1. *Firſt you muſt know that the cauſe why you are gather'd together in the Cloiſter is, that you live all together in* unity *with* one *heart, and* one *ſoul in God.*

The firſt advertiſment that S. Auguſtin gives us, is to live with union and concord with one another which muſt be underſtood the union and concord of which Almighty God is the band. For it would be a diſorder to be united with intention to do ill; whereas it is ſomthing moſt excellent to be united and agree

to ſeek the only true good, to practiſe vertue, and to ſerve God. It is for that we are aſſembled in this holy place, where we are obliged to employ our ſelves in the ſervice of his divine Majeſty, with as great a coreſpondance of Charity, as if we had but one heart, and one ſoul: and it is to advertiſe us of the ſame, that the Rule ſays in terms ſo clear, that we ought to live in the houſe of our Lord with a perfect union of minds, and having all but one heart and one ſoul in God.

It is not ſufficient then to be corporally together in the ſame Houſe; but this ſociety teaches us that our minds ought to be ſtill cloſer linked together; for it would ſignifie nothing to be within the compaſs of the ſame walls in a corporal manner, if we were in a ſpiritual diſtance by the oppoſition of wills; Almighty God having incomparably more regard

gard to the union of minds than to that of places. We are here all together by his grace in the ſame houſe, but that is not enough, and we muſt not think we have done all by entering the Cloiſter; for we have brought with us different manners of acting, we have each reſerved a heart apart, our ſouls are not the ſame. What muſt we then do to comply with the Rule? we muſt reunite all theſe things by one ſole intention to do good, and by one and the ſame love for God: ſo that the union of our minds, and of our wills may tend unanimously to ſerve him with all our ſtrength, to give our ſelves to him with all our heart and with all our ſoul, and to love our neighbour as our ſelves.

Now the means to acquire ſo neceſſary a good is this, let thoſe who embrace the religious life begin by ſtriping themſelves of their own will, and conforming to him who has ſaid

ſaid, *I am come from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that ſent me:* Jo. 6. 38. and again. *Father, not my will but thine be done.* Luk. 22. 42. Nothing contributes more to maintain a right underſtanding, and to make peace reigne amongſt many Perſons, than when each Studys thus not to do his own will, but that of others for the true good. Neither is there a more certain ſigne of a great humility than this ſelf denyal: It is this voluntary deveſting our ſelves which breeds obedience, it augments Charity, maintains peace, makes juſtice unmoveable; and in a word, it is what gives motion to all the great vertues from which the church receives ſo much beauty. But if I will do my will and another will do his, diviſions will preſently ſtart up, hot conteſtations will be heard on both ſides, anger and quarells will break out, which S. Paul calls the works of the

the flesh, and of which he ſays. *That they who do ſuch things ſhall not obtain the kingdome of* God. Gal. 5. 21.

It is a deplorable thing that even in regular communities there is to be ſeen of thoſe who are obſtinatly fixt to their own ſenſe, who are wiſe in their own conceits, and having got a thing in their heads, deffend it as if there was nothing to get others of their ſide, but will yield to no body, and are in great diſturbance and trouble if their will is not comply'd with. Such are ordinarily rebellious to the orders of their Elders, ſubject to impatience, and inclined to revolt: they want all that is neceſſary to maintain concord, becauſe according to the words of the Apoſtle, *they are loſt in their own imaginations, and their foolish heart is darken'd; for profeſſing themſelves wiſe they are become fools.* Rom. 1. 21. Pride does indeed very much

† More reaſonable, who omit nothing.

much darken the heart; for as to truth there is no body more miſerably ſeduced than a man who prefers himſelf to others, and is conceited of a falſe wiſdome which the Apoſtle treated with ſo much contempt when he wrote to the Corinthians: *if any one among you ſeem to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wiſe.* 1. Cor. 3. 18. It is only thoſe who make themſelves ſensleſs in this manner, who deſerve the name of wiſe; for according to God, it is a great wiſdome to think one has leſs than others, which made the wiſe man ſay. *The greater thou art, humble thy ſelf in all things.* Eccl. 3. 20. It was alſo for that reaſon, that our ſaviour knowing his Diſciples had had a diſpute among themſelves concerning preeminency, made uſe of humility to bring them back to charity and peace, ſaying to them: *He who would be the firſt among*

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you, ſhall be your ſervaut, as the ſon of man came not to be ſerved, but to ſerve, and give his life a ranſome for many. Mat. 20. 27 28.

Since it is then a thing ſo excellent and ſo pleaſing to Almighty God, that brethren be united together, let us uſe all our endeavours to keep a perfect union of minds in this houſe which is conſecrated to him; and the charity which shall thus unite us, will ſo delight him, that our faſts, and our prayers, however auſtere be the firſt, or long the ſecond, nay our very offerings will have nothing comparable to it. We ſee it in the Goſpel when Jeſus Chriſt turning from his Altars him who was at variance with his brother, ſaid to him, *firſt go to be reconciled to thy brother, and then thou ſhalt come and offer thy gift.* Mat. 5. 24. Teaching us all by this example, that they who are not united to their neighbour by the ſpirit of peace

peace and charity, are not in a condition to offer agreable Sacrifices to Almighty God. And can there be any thing more ſtrong to convince us of the excellence of this vertue, than to ſee that the very Sacrifices eſtablish'd to efface ſins, loſe their force, and have nothing more which pleaſes God. + without it.

Yet let us add for another reaſon that when we embrace this ſtate of converſion, I mean a religious life, we at the ſame time engage our ſelves to bear ſuch rough combats with the devil, that we ſtand in need of ſtrong arms to overcome him, and there is none that this mortal enemy apprehends ſo much as concord and the ſpirit of Charity. For if we diſtribute all that we have to the poor for the love of God, and impoverish our ſelves by a General renunciation of all our goods; the devil is not much affraid of that, becauſe he poſſeſſes nothing: if we faſt

faſt, that does not frighten him, becauſe he has the advantage over us, that he never eats: if we watch that do's not much terrifie him neither, becauſe he knows not what it is to ſleep and repoſe. But if we keep united together by the bond of Charity, then he is ſtruck with a terrible fear, becauſe he ſees us poſſeſs a bleſſing upon earth which he took no care to conſerve in heaven.

This is alſo what renders the holy church ſo dreadfull to the powers of darkneſs, that she is repreſented in their regard as an army ſet in battle array; becauſe as the enemy ſeeing an army advance againſt him, that is well united, and cloſe in their ranks, is terrified, and apprehends the ſucceſs of the battle: ſo the devil conſidering a company of ſpiritual perſons already cover'd with the arms of all the vertues, and who have alſo the advantage of living in a per-

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feɛt union, he is ſeiſed with dread, and feels before hand the pain of his defeat, when he cannot rush in amongſt them and divide them by diſcord. Therefore it is written of our Lord, *his place is made in peace, and his habitation in Sion, there he brakes the powers of bows, the shield, the sword, and the battle.* Pſal. 75. Becauſe union of hearts in God, breaks the devils arms, and makes all his attempts in vain.

§ 3. *With* one *heart, and* one *ſoul in God.*

Theſe are the Firſt fruits of the ſpirit, the firſt offering we ought to make to Almighty God at the beginning of our converſion; it is what wiſdome ſo preſſingly requires of us by theſe ſo moving words. *My Son give me thy heart.* Prov. 23. 26. And with great reaſon she demands that at firſt we give her that chief part of our ſelves; becauſe when we are

drawn to God, the firſt bonds of that attract holds to our heart, and our will is gain'd the firſt of all. It is not enough to be corporaly ſeparated from the world, we muſt alſo labour to unite our ſelves to Almighty God with all our heart and with all our ſoul, that we may be able to ſay with truth. Pſal. 72. *It is good for me to adhere to my God, becauſe, he who adheres to the Lord, is one ſpirit.* 1. Cor. 6. 17. Let us then adhere to his Divine Majeſty that we may become ſtrong by him, and happy with him; that is to ſay, to the end he may give us thoſe all powerful arms which the enemy of our ſalvation cannot reſiſt, and by a holy ſociety he may introduce us. into the participation of the felicity he enjoys himſelf, ſo that we may ſay without fear of miſtake; *my ſoul is united to you, Lord.* Pſal. 62. and she shall never be ſeparated from you. It is Charity which does all

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in us, she unites us to God, she ſeparates us from the world, she aſſembles us together in the ſame houſe; and the only means to have there but *one* heart and *one* ſoul in God, is to have charity, it is to love Almighty God with all our heart and with all our ſoul: becauſe, *God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.* 1. Jo: 4. 16. Now becauſe this vertue has the property not to ſeek her own intereſt, the Rule preſently adds as a neceſſary conſequence.

§ 4. *You ſhall not therefore call any thing* your own, *but all things ſhall be in Common.*

We ought to have no propriety, and it is not well in us to ſay of any thing whatſoever. *My* or *mine*; but we should uſe the word *our habit*, *our houſe*, and ſo of the other things we have for our uſe: for as all is in common among us, our

diſcourſe muſt expreſs that we have nothing in particular.

By this we may obſerve the great difference there is between carnal and ſpiritual brothers or ſiſters: thoſe divide among themſelves the the goods which before they shared in common; theſe on the contrary put into the common all that they poſſeſt before in particular: among thoſe each ſeeks his own, among theſe no body does ſo, but each ſeeks that which belongs to Jeſus Chriſt. The ſpiritual alliance has then more force than the natural one, ſince this laſt degenerates and falls into defect, whereas the other raiſes it ſelf to perfection; the one tends to diviſion, and the other to union; the one paſſes with time, and the other remains in eternity, which is the whole happyneſs we aſpire to, by our union in the houſe of our Lord. *We are the ſons of God*; Says the beloved Apoſtle *and*

it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; becauſe we shall ſee him as he is. 1. Jo. 2. 2. And S. Paul. *We have not a permanent city, but we ſeek that which is to come.* Heb. 13. 14.

Since then all our deſire and hope is to be together in heaven, let us have a holy contempt for all the things of the earth; let us think it below us to poſſeſs any of them in particular, and be content to have them in common. People of the world will always there divide their goods; and not being able to graſpe them all, they cling to ſome more than to others, and if poſſible, would have no body share in thoſe they love. Some heap up gold and ſilver, others delight to live in ſtately houſes; there are of thoſe who take pleaſure in making great alliances for themſelves, or in having children to advance their Glory: many

many do what they can, to raiſe themſelves to high charges: theſe ſeek eſteem and applauſe, thoſe delight to command with authority: thus all ſeek to poſſeſs ſomthing in particular, ſome one way, and ſome another: but the portion of the Saints is God himſelf. If then we would have that excellent part, and enter into that rich inheritance, our life muſt be ſo pure that we may be worthy to poſſeſs him, and to be poſſeſt by him; which is the ſame thing in effect, and can only be acquired by a general diſengagement.

Whoſoever would have God for poſſeſſion ought neither to ſeek nor love any thing out of him He is too covetuous whom God ſuffices not, and his avarice far from enriching him, will rather produce in him an unhappy indigence; for if he will alſo have ſome other thing, as gold, ſilver, revenues &c. Almighty God will not debaſe himſelf

to the becoming part of an inheritance compoſed of ſuch different goods, and he will never have share of a heart that will not be entirely his. S. Jerome was well perſwaded of this when he gave that excellent inſtruction ſaying of himſelf. „ „ I receive no inheritance among „ the other Tribes; but in quality „ of Prieſt and Levite I live on the „ tythes; and ſerving the Altar I „ get my ſubſiſtance from the goods „ that are offer'd at the Altar: ha- „ ving food and clothing I ask no „ more, and I am content becauſe „ I know what the Goſpel ſays: *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdome of heaven.* Mat. 5. 3. Becauſe however great our diſengagement be, we cannot whilſt we are upon earth ſhift without many things neceſſary to maintain the body. The Rule which provides for all and thinks nothing below its cares, adds that which follows.

§ 5.

§ 5. *And every one shall receive by the appointment of the ſuperiour food and cloathing.*

The order that our ſaviour has eſtabliſsd in his Church, is that ſome should apply themſelves to ſpiritual exercises, and others take care to give them temporal things: and it was for that he would have ſuperiours and inferiours, that ſome might govern whilſt other remained in ſubmiſſion. It is the office of ſuperiours to ſupply the corporal wants of their ſubjects; and it is the duty of inferiours to apply themſelves to ſpiritual things; as to reading, prayer, contemplation; ſerving the Maſter they have in heaven by ſinging Pſalms, Hymns, ſpiritual canticles, and by watching over themſelves with a greater application ſince they are excuſed from the care of exteriour things, which might

might diſtract them. Our Lord has alſo eſtablished an order in favour of his Miniſters, that thoſe who ſerve the Altar should receive from the Altar what is neceſſary for their maintenance: becauſe as he ſays himſelf: *The Labourer is worthy of his hire.* Luk. 10. 7. Since then we live upon the revenues of Jeſus Chriſt, juſtice requires that we beſtow our labours in the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, and we have no right to the reward till we have work'd like faithfull, labourers: *If any man will not work, neither let him eat*, 2. Theſſ. 3. 10. Said S. Paul. If then we eat when we do not work, our crime is as much the greater as we are leſs worthy of God's benefits, which we enjoy without deſert.

Once more I ſay that we are indiſpenſably obliged to employ our life in the ſervice of him whoſe bounty and providence gives us a maintence, if we would with a ſafe con-

conscience partake of the goods which are distributed among us; and our fervour in the service of Almighty God ought to be so much the greater, as the labour is light for which is so Charitably given us from his divine Majesty, what is necessary for us. What wonder is it if persons taken up by their charges with the care of temporal things, exteriourly shew a little less fervour and religion, if they often fall into faults, either by the tumult of their thoughts, the inconsideratness of their words, or neglect of vigilancy in their actions; since the commerce and frequentation of seculars is so contagious that it somtimes drags a man to sin even when he endeavours the contrary? But those who have the advantage of not being charged with the care of worldly things, nor exposed to the occasions of sin, if they do not render their life conformable to the spirit of the religion they have embra-

braced, they incur the anger of the ſovereigne judge: and the leaſt faults into which they fall by negligence, expoſes them to the danger of utter ruin. Therefore it is matter of great importance, to have alwayes in mind the obligation linked to that diſtribution which is made us of temporal goods for food and cloathing, and to apply our ſelves entirely *to ſeek firſt the kingdome of God and his juſtice*; Since it is for that all other things are given us as an overplus. The ſequel of the Rule teaches us how that diſtribution is to be made.

§ 6. *But*

§ 6. *But that is not to be diſtributed alike and in equal meaſure unto all, but rather to be given unto every one, according to her need; as we read in the acts of the Apoſtlees,* that all things were in common amongſt them, and that they divided the ſame unto every one according to their need. Acts 4 32.

This paſſage that S. Auguſtin cites in confirmation, and for proof of his Rule; is not to be underſtood as if neceſſaries were diſtributed to thoſe faithfull in ſuch abundance, that they felt no more any want: for if it is written in one place that *there was not any one needy among them.* Ibid. 4. 34. We ſee alſo in another, that the

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Apoſtles ſerved God *in hunger and thirſt, in many faſtings, in cold, and nakedneſs.* 2. Cor. 11. 27. Which lets us ſee that one may be in neceſſity as to the body, and yet want nothing in relation to the ſoul. ô! you then who have renounced your ſelves for the love of Jeſus Chriſt, learn by this example to overcome the weakneſs of nature, by the ſtrength of the ſpirit: exerciſe your ſelves in a holy diſengagement from all terrene things: open your hearts to that love of God which is ſtrong as death; and you will experience that perfect charity has not the full action it is capable of, when it only cuts off criminal deſires; but that it alſo extends it's efficacy ſo far as to extinguish the very feelings of the body, and to make one forget the wants of nature.

The grace of the holy ghoſt in the primitive church repleniſsd the hearts of the faithfull with ſo great

an abundance, that they were not only content with little, but the very poverty by which they reduced themſelves to the having nothing, excited in their ſouls holy effuſions of an inconceivable joy. *We have nothing*, ſaid S. Paul, *yet we poſſeſs all things*. 2. Cor. 6. 10. And in another place. *Piety with ſufficiency is great gain*: *having then food, and wherewith to be cover'd, with theſe we are content*. Ibid. 8. And can we wonder that after the publication of the Goſpell, grace filling the heart should make it find abundance in the midſt of poverty; when we ſee in the ancient law, that the Mother of young Toby found that the preſence and ſight of that dear ſon was a ſufficient benefit to change her poor condition into conſiderable riches. Tob. 5. 25.

In corporal ſolaces then, we ought not to conſider what the flesh requires to ſatisfie its appetites; but what

what ſtrength nature has to ſuffer want: for ſenſuality always asks more than neceſſity does, and there needs much leſs to ſatisfie this than to content that. Therefore when the Rule ſays: to every one one ſhall be given according to her need, it muſt be ſo underſtood that the flesh may have nourishment enough not to fail us in the performance of our duties; but that its appetites be ſtoutly reſiſted, to hinder it from rebelling againſt the ſpirit: that the neceſſities of nature be ſatisfied; but the ſuperfluities of concupiſcence retrenched.

§ 7. *Such perſons therefore as in the world were rich or had any goods, ſhall be well content to have their ſubſtance put into the Common.*

Such was the diſpoſition of the primitive Chriſtians at the beginning

ning of the Church: they were perſuaded that being become brethren, and sharing all in one general grace, there was nothing more juſt than to have all their goods in common; and they thought it reaſonable there being but one ſpirit for them all, that there should be alſo but one ſtock among them from which they received their ſubſiſtance. S. Auguſtin who deſired to renew that perfect life, is not content neither to have thoſe who embrace his rule barely ſtrip themſelves of their goods, but he will have them do it with joy, and be well content, glad to have them put in common, becauſe, *God loveth a chearful giver.* 2. Cor. 9. 7. And who can be ſorry to make the happy change of earthly goods for thoſe of heaven, if he reflects that the kingdome of heaven promiſed to the poor is unvaluable; that it is always incomparably worth more than can be given for it;

and

and that nothing costs less when purchased, nor nothing of greater value when possess'd? there are two things we ought to forsake for God, which are the power to posses, and the will to have. We learn this of Jesus Christ, who says in one occasion: *He that doth not renounce all things that he possesseth, cannot be my Disciple.* Luk. 14. 33. And in another. *If any one will come after me, let him deny himself.* Luk. 9. 23. The first of these divine sentences regards exteriour goods, and the second the will: because it is not sufficient to forsake exteriour things, if we do not also cut off the interiour concupiscence and desire of them; as we are advertised by that which follows in the rule.

§ 8. *And those who were poor before, must not in any wise seek to have and find in the Monastry* that *which they were not able to enjoy in the world*

Those very persons who had no-

thing in the world may find in theſe holy places ſomthing to forſake for Almighty God: and that is the will to have. The law contained an expreſs commandment to rule the will alone viz. *You ſhall have no evil deſires*; Exod. 20.15. becauſe God examins more ſtrictly the deſire than the poſſeſſion, and the holy Ghoſt requires all our affections, and all our inclinations, by theſe words: *Son give me thy heart.* Which can only be done by retrenching all carnal deſires. Thus two things are recommended to us in the holy ſtate we have embraced; the firſt to forſake all we poſſeſs, the ſecond, never to ſeek earthly goods; to the end that our heart diſengaged from all clogg, may run with more ſwiftneſs and vigour to the conqueſt of heaven. But for fear that thus forbidding thoſe, who enter poor into the Monaſtry to ſeek temporal conveniences there, it might ſeem as if there was

was no obligation to give them all that is neceſſary for them, the rule goes on.

§ 9. *Notwithſtanding* they *alſo ſhall have out of the common what their need or infirmity requires, although their former poverty, was ſuch, that they wanted then even bodily neceſſaries.*

The reaſon of this ordination is, becauſe it is juſt that thoſe who engage in the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould live upon the revenues of Jeſus Chriſt, whether they have been poor or rich, deſcended of noble Parents, or of mean extraction: becauſe it is a general verity, pronounced in the Goſpel without exception, that *the Labourer is worthy of his hire.* The Rule. 1. Tim. 5. 18.

§ 10. *Yet for all that, they muſt not think themſelves well at eaſe, becauſe in the cloyſter they have found ſuch food and cloathing which they could not find out of it.*

There are many perſons, and perhaps more than we think for, who embrace a religious life leſs to ſeek the ſalvation of their ſouls, which they have but little care of, than to avoid the corporal neceſſity they apprehend: who care not for what regards Almighty God and his Glory; but with great ſolicitude think of that which will fill their own belly. Of ſuch the Apoſtle ſays, *their God is their belly*; Phil. 3. 19. And it was, to others like them, that our Lord addreſsd theſe words: *Amen, Amen I ſay to you, you ſeek me, not becauſe you have ſeen miracles, but becauſe you did eat of the loaves, and were fill'd.* Jo. 6. 26. Thoſe who

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are markd by ſo ill a character, place all their happyneſs in an application to the being well fed, well clad, well accomodated with all temporal things, and cannot bear the want of any thing. But becauſe they only deſire earthly goods, they deprive themſelves of heavenly: for our Lord will ſay of them at the day of judgment, what he has already ſaid of ſuch in his Goſpel: *Amen I ſay to you, they have received their reward, upon earth.* Matt. 6. 16.

Therefore we ought to apply our ſelves moſt carefully to find out the bent of our heart, and be very vigilant to hinder it from adhering to tranſitory things, however valuable they may appear: for it was generally of all thoſe perishable goods that the Prophet ſaid: *if riches abound ſet not your heart upon them.* Pſal. 61. It is true we cannot yet do without earthly thinghs, and we are forced to make uſe of ſome of them: but all

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our deſires, and the whole capacity of our heart, ought to be fill'd, and taken up with the heavenly bleſſings. They who act thus, do not impoverish themſelves, but rather become truly rich: for they find in Jeſus Chriſt a ſweetneſs as admirable as it is ineffable; in him they find thoſe ſolide riches, that excellent good that Almighty God has laid up for thoſe who love him, and which is ſo great *that the eye hath not ſeen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for thoſe who love him.* 1. Cor. 2. 9. Happy they who can always be in the diſpoſition of that holy Prophet who only opened his heart to the love of the eternal goods, and in the ſacred tranſport, cauſed by the violence of his deſires, he cry'd out to Almighty God: *I ſhall be fill'd when thy Glory ſhall appear.* Pſal. 16. In this infinit contentment we ought alſo to place our happy-

neſs,

neſs, and our deſires.

§ 11. *Neither may they carry themſelves high becauſe they are now become fellowſiſter's with them, into whoſe company in the world they durſt not have preſumed to approach: but let them rather lift up their minds to heavenly things, and not ſeek the vain and tranſitory things of this life. For if this order be not obſerved, the Monaſtry will be profitable to rich perſous, and not to the poor, if therein the noble and rich become humble, and the poor of mean degree, be puffed up with pride.*

To hold up the head which is the latin expreſſion S. Auguſtin uſes (for carrying themſelves high) is a mark of pride or vain complaiſance in ones ſelf, and when he recommends to thoſe who have the chief part in this place of his rule, not

to hold up their heads, it is as if he ſaid to them: forget not your firſt condition, and do'nt exalt your ſelves by vain thoughts. If heaven it ſelf was not advantagious to the proud Angels, the Monaſtry doubtleſs will not be profitable to thoſe who ſhall imitate thoſe unfortunate ſpirits in their ſin. For thô we live in a holy houſe, thô we wear a holy habit, thô we do actions holy in themſelves, yet all that is made unprofitable by pride, which extravigantly exalts, but always ends in a fatal down fall. It was to avoid that precipice the royal Prophet made this prayer to Almighty God: *Let not the the foot of pride come near to me; there have they fallen, that work iniquity, they were expelld, neither could they ſtand.* Pſal. 35. Nor remain in the happy ſtate he had created them in. The humble on the contrary, find in the Monaſtery moſt conſiderable advantages: for

God

God teaches them his verities, and diſcovers his ſecrets to them, as it ſtands written: *he will teach the meek his wayes.* Pſal. 24. And again: *you ſend forth fountains in to the valleys.* Pſal. 103. 10. That is to ſay, he communicates his graces to humble ſouls. Such perſons labour with ſucceſs in the work of their ſalvation, becauſe never forſaking humility which is the Guardian of the vertues, the good works they practice are alwayes ſecure; aud chooſing by the Prophet's example to be deſpiſed, and abject in the houſe of our Lord, they have for reward this advantage, that their prayers penetrate the heavens, and are ever favorably heard; and then obeying Jeſus Chriſt who reduces his Diſciples to the laſt place, the father of the family will one day make them aſcend up higher, according to what is writen, *every one that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be humbled, and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall*

shall be exalted. Luk. 18. 14. And in another place, *God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.* 1. Pet. 5. 5.

CHAPTER II.

Of Humility.

§ 1. *But again, such persons as were of a distinguish'd rank in the world, must not therefore slight and contemn their fellow sisters who came into holy religion from a poor and mean condition in the world: for they ought rather more to Glory in the company of their poor sisters, than in the greatness of their own rich parentage.*

ALL those who have embraced the holy state of a regular community, thô they have more means, or greater quality, or more wisdome than some others of the religious, yet they ought to avoid with great care, the conceiving a contempt for

for any. And the reaſon why all theſe advantages ought not to encline thoſe who poſſeſs them, to exalt themſelves above thoſe who have them not, or who have them in an inferiour degree, is, *becauſe God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world, to confound the wiſe men: &c.* 1. Cor. 1. 27. *God hath choſen the weak things and the mean & contemptible things of the world, that no flesh may glory in his ſight.* Ibid. 28 29. That is, neither he who is powerfull becauſe of his power, nor he who is wiſe becauſe of his wiſdome, nor he who is rich becauſe of his riches: for God makes no exception of perſons, and there is but one and the ſame Lord who is rich to all thoſe who invoke him. There could not doubtleſs be given us an advertiſment more conformable to true piety, than that of placing our Glory, not in the ſecular greatneſs of our parents, becauſe they are noble

noble and rich, but in the company of our ſiſters becauſe they are poor: ſince even he who poſſeſſes all the infinit treaſures of glory in the boſome of his father, has been pleaſed to deſcend upon earth, and there, for love of us, reduce himſelf to the condition of having no place to repoſe his head.

Who ever ſaw that God of Majeſty, during the days of his mortal life, ſeek the company and converſation of the Grandees of the world? who ever ſaw him frequent the Palaces of Kings or Governers? on the Contrary, did he not converſe familiarly with the leaſt of the people, and was he not always encompaſs'd with the poor, that we might alſo make our ſelves poor with him, and by the diſpoſſeſſion of earthly goods enter the kingdome of heaven which is promiſed to the poor? let us then leave to worldlings that vanity ſo ordinary

with

with them, and which ought to ſeem ſo ridiculous to us, of glorying in riches; and let us enter before hand into the ſentiments of the ſaints, who in the ſtate of happyneſs they enjoy, ſee clearly, that, voluntary poverty is incomparably more glorious than riches.

§ 2. *Neither ſhall they be proud, or take more upon them, becauſe they gave their goods to the community; nor yet ſhall they value themſelves for the wealth which they have beſtowed upon the Monaſtery, any more than if they had enjoyed it in the world at their own pleaſure.*

We learn by this Rule that there are two ſorts of pride, the one carnal, the other ſpiritual; that to have a diſguſt and contempt for the poor, or to glory in ones own nobility, is an effect of that carnal

nal pride, to which ſecular people are ſubject: but to exalt our ſelves for the acts of charity we have done, or for the other good works we have practiced, is the motion of that ſpiritual pride which but too often corrupts the conſcience of thoſe very perſons who have a value for vertue. Now however dangerous carnal vanity is, the ſpiritual pride is ſtill more perilous: becauſe to grow proud of vertue and ſanctity, is to fall from an eminent place to which we were mounted, and the higher the place is from whence one falls, the more dangerous is the fall. Our ſaviour ſaid. *When thou giveſt Alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth: that thy Alms may be in privote, and thy father who ſeeth in private will repay thee.* Matt. 6. 3. 4. By the right hand he means the acts of vertue, and by the left, he ſignifys the praiſe of men, and vain glory:

glory: and it is an advertiſment our Lord gives us to shelter our good works from vanity, by concealing them from the praiſes of men, that we may receive ſome reward for them from our heavenly father.

§ 3. *For all other vices tend to make us do evil works, but pride lyes lurking even in good works to deſtroy them, and make them of no value.*

We may well ſay that pride is the greateſt and moſt pernicious of the vices, ſince it makes as much uſe of the vcrtues as of the ſins to ruin us. This vice is an object of averſion that neither God nor man can ſuffer; *it is the beginnig of all ſin*; Eccle. 10. 25. It is the ſource of all evils. It marches before all the crimes to make us fall into them; it remains after we have overcome all, to engage

us again in fresh conflicts. For when a ſervant of God has gain'd the victory over all the other ſins, and is already mounted to the higheſt pitch of the vertues, he finds pride in that eminent place ready to declare a new war againſt him, and if he does not gain a new victory, in vain are all the generous efforts he has made againſt the other ſins. When we perform then any good action, which is remarkable as to the exteriour, let us keep our heart from the vain conceit which is preſently offered to deſtroy and corrupt it; becauſe there is no work however holy an aſpect it has, which pleaſes God when ſpoyled by this vice: and therefore the wiſe man ſays. *With all guard keep thy heart, becauſe life proceeds from it.* Prov. 4. 23. It follows in the Rule.

§ 4.

§ 4. *What then does it avail to give freely away all to te poor and become poor, if the wretched ſoul becomes more proud by forſaking Riches than by poſſeſſing the ſame?*

It ſignifies nothing to renounce our goods if we do not alſo renonce our ſelves; for our Lord does not ſay bleſſed are the poor of goods or means; *but bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdome of heaven.* When any then have deſpiſed temporal goods, far from being conceited of that, they ought to be rather the more humble, and they had much better have kept them living in the world than to forſake them ſo as to make of them a ſubject of greater pride in theſe holy places which ought, to be ſchools of humility. Happy is the ſoul which excited and preſſed by the Love of Jeſus Chriſt, diſtributes all her goods to the poor, to live afterwards in a profound humility; but unhappy

are they who from that generous renunciation draw a ſubject of vanity and preſumption; for there is none more certainly miſerable than a man who tends to ſin by vertue it ſelf, and who engages himſelf in endleſs torments by the actions he thinks worthy of eternal rewards. Yet this is what happens to the proud man; who having deſired and ſought an eminent place, finds himſelf at laſt in a profound Abyſs; and the precipice he falls into, is as much deeper as he had ſoar'd higher above his reach.

The ſource of diviſions being thus cut off by the banishment of the vices which produce them, the Rule begins again to ſpeak of unity.

§ 5. *Livetherefore I ſay with concord and unity among your ſelves, and honour Almighty God in one another whoſe temples you are now become.*

We shall comply with this precept

cept when we are come to the pitch of having but one ſpirit in God, and are the perfect imitators of the primitive Chriſtians, who had but one heart and one ſoul. Now when the Rule requires union of minds, that regards the intention and the will, which ought to be the ſame in all, and when it demands union of hearts, that is ſtill ſomthing more; becauſe it reaches even to all the actions and to all the conduct of life. For the the order we ought to obſerve to attain to the perfection of our ſtate, is firſt to have all the ſame will, and the ſame deſigne, which is to work our ſalvation: and then to act all in concert, as by the motion of the ſame heart, ſo that all the different functions ſpiritual or temporal, diſtributed to many, may be performed, with an entire coreſpondancy of charity towards one another. A religious perſon who would live in this ſpirit of union, ought firſt

to get rid of her ill habits, if she has any, and be no more neither malicious, nor irregular, nor obstinate in her fancies, nor troublesome to others by her unquietness: then she must use so much circumspection in her actions, and in such sort square her life, that she may be in a perfect concord with her companions to tend to God.

But it is an afflicting thing to see that there are some who after having left the world, will still follow their own will which they have not forsaken, and that there are even others who instead of applying themselves to what would be profitable to the community, seek only themselves, and are ambitious of employments which may make them seem bright to the eyes of seculars: and it is to this double mischief that the Rule would apply a remedy when it bids us live together in a perfect union of minds and hearts. As for

the advertiſment it gives us of honouring Almighty God in one another; we shall do ſo if loving one another for the love of his devine Majeſty, we keep his precepts with due application; and we shall alſo have the happyneſs to become his Temples when we carefully endeavour to move his divine ſpirit to make his dwelling in us. All that we can do to make our ſelves worthy of ſo conſiderable a bleſsing is to uſe our beſt endeavours to render the devine Majeſty all the worship he expects of us, but it belongs to his goodneſs to compleat the reſt by abaſing his grandeur to honour us with his preſence, and enlighten us by his grace.

The following explication may be alſo given to this part of the Rule.

Neither

Neither ſhall they be proud nor take more upon them becauſe they gave their goods to the commnnity &c.

It is incomparably better to retain and poſſeſs ones goods in the world, than ſo to diſtribute them in religion as to make of them a motive of vain glory: for the moment we exalt our ſelves we ore caſt down; and thoſe who are puffed up with pride for the good works they practice, ruin themſelves by the very way which ſhould ſerve them to work their ſalvation: becauſe the vertuous action accompany'd with vanity, far from raiſing us towards heaven, weighs us down to the earth. Happy he who can ſay with the Prophet. *Lord my heart is not exalted neither are mine eyes lofty, neither have I walked in great matters, nor in marvellous things above me.* Pſal. 112. happy he who has no ſecret pride

pride at the bottom of his ſoul, nor apparent vanity in the exteriour of his actions; who is not vain in his countenance, nor in his cloathes, nor in his diſcourſes, nor in his actions, nor in any of his other motions! happy he who does not walk in high ways that is, who does not think himſelf better than his fellows, or who does not carry it high for his Nobility, or for the power he had in the world, or becauſe he brought his goods to the common, or profitably ſerves his houſe in ſome employment! in fine, happy he who does not affect to be admired by men neither for his exactneſs in the practice of religions duties, nor for the great ſanctity he has received from Almighty God, and who does not for that more eaſily shew himſelf to attract admiration and praiſe.

But becauſe it is rare to find perſons who do not feel ſome motion of vain glory, and ſome tincture of com-

complaiſance, in the midſt of theſe great advantages; that the ſervant of God may avoid all theſe ſnares, he ought always to think humbly of himſelf, and never ſuffer the leaſt pride in his heart, but keep it down, and repreſs it continually, as it is written, *the greater thou art, humble thy ſelf in all things.* Eccle. 3. 20.

Thoſe who ſhall attentively read the following words will find in them great cauſe of fear.

§ 6. *For all other vices tend to make us do evil works, but pride lyes lurking even in good works to deſtroy them, and make them of no value.*

Avarice exerciſes its malignity upon evil things. Luxury commits diſorders by for bidden actions, and the like of other ſins: it is pride only which even attacks good works, which abuſes vertuous actions, and lays ſnares to ruin all good. The Pha-

Pharisee loſt in a moment all the ſpiritual riches he had gained in many years, becauſe he numbered them to Almighty God with a vain complaiſance; and his misfortune ought to be an inſtruction to us, which may keep us always in fear: for as we ſome times ſee perſons who become more proud of their contempt of vain glory in certain occaſions, ſo it may alſo happen to us, that after having deſpiſed riches, we may become vain and proud of it in a manner leſs ſupportable.

§ 7. *What then does it avail to give freely away all to the poor and become poor, if the wretched ſoul becomes more proud by forſaking riches than by poſſeſſing the ſame.*

This is as if he ſaid in a more preciſe manner: what ſignifies poverty with pride? the rich man who

who is humble is better than the poor who is proud; and the ſinner who has ſentiments of humility, is preferable to the juſt who yields to preſumptious thoughtts. Therefore the ſervants of God ought to uſe an exact circumſpection in all things, firſt to abſtain from all evil, ſecondly to neglect no good they are capable of, and finally not to exalt themſelves for the good works they have done; becaufe all thoſe we can practice have no ſolidity nor value if hnmility does not preſerve them. Nay poverty it ſelf is not in that diſtinguishd from the other vertues; it has no privilege in regard of vanity, and we are only the poor of Jeſus Chriſt, when we are humble for the love of Jeſus Chriſt: for it is not generally of all the poor, but only of thoſe who are poor in ſpirit, that the Goſpel gives aſsurance, *that theirs is the kingdome of heaven.* Matt. 5. 3.

§ 8. *Live therefore I ſay, with concord and unity among your ſelves, and honour Almighty God in one another whoſe temples you are now become.*

It is the union of poverty and humility which produces charity; which maintains concord and peace in ſocieties, where many perſons live together, and it is that peace and concord which makes us the temples of Almighty God. So whether we would honour God and move him to come into our hearts, which are the ſanctuaries he will inhabit, or that we would make known to the world that we are the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, we muſt conſerve the union and charity of Jeſus Chriſt, who ſaid: *By this all men ſhall know that you are my diſciples, if you have love one for another.* Jo. 13. 35.

Chap-

CHAPTER III.

Of Prayer.

I. § Be attentive to prayer at the ſet times and hours appointed.

TO prevent the time of prayer, is a ſigne of forecaſt, to pray in the times appointed is an act of obedience, but to let paſs the time of prayer is a fault of negligence. There is not only one hour in the day appointed for prayer, but many hours; becauſe we are as much obliged to pray the oftener, as we know the advantage it is to us. If our prayers ought to be aſſiduous, it is not leſs important that they be ardent and fervorous; becauſe the bleſſings that Almighty God promiſes us are ſo great and conſiderable that neither eye has ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it aſcendcd into the heart of man, to conceive what God has pre-

prepared for thoſe who love him. Now his Divine Majeſty will not have us loſe the high Idea we ought to conceive of thoſe bleſſings, nor have them expoſed to contempt by the facility of ſeeking and finding them: a Marchandiſe ſo precious and ſo worthy of all our wiſhes, requires a purchaſer eager and full of deſires, and it is that earneſtneſs our ſaviour excites us to in the Goſpel when he ſays, *Ask, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and you ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened to you.* Mat. 7. 7. Eternal life is not promiſed neither to the ſlothfull, nor to the tepid, nor to the remiſs and fainthearted; but to thoſe who are couragious and undertaking, as the Scripture tells us by theſe words, *the kingdome of heaveu ſuffers violence, and thoſe that uſe violence bear it away.* Mat. 11. 12. Prayer is an agreeable violence to Almighty God, and he loves that importunity, ſo we muſt not

not wonder if he even requires that we use it to him: for if the goods he promises us are so great, ought he to suffer our desires to be but indifferent? and is it not expedient on the contrary, that the greedyness and eagerness of our heart have some proportion with the value and richness of the recompense?

But if Almighty God does not seem moved at our first requests, nor will not so readily grant what we ask of him, we must not for that cease to seek and knock. On the contrary, 't is then we must arm our selves with courage, and redouble our instances and prayers with still more vigour: it is then we must fill our saviour's ears with more shrill groans and cries: it is then we must importune him with a more stiff obstinacy (if I may dare use that expression) till he grants us the graces we stand in need of. But if we find our conscience ful-

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ly'd by the impurity of ſome ſin that we have committed either by thought, word, or deed, we muſt then add tears to our prayers, have recourſe to the mercy of our Redeemer with a profound humility, ſollicite our pardon by continual weepings, and employ alſo the interceſſion of the Saints that we may be more favorably received. There's no doubt but if by the example of the Cananean woman, we perſevere in prayer, and continue our inſtances norwithſtanding the apparent checks we think we ſuffer, Jeſus Chriſt will be moved at laſt, and by his grace will come to correct all our errours, cleanſe all our impurities, and reſtore to us a tranquillity and calme after the toſſing ſtorm: *For he is faithfull & juſt, to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all iniquity.* 1. Jo. 1. 9. If we cry to him with all the ſtrength of our ſoul.

But

But to the end we may pray in secret, and not be diverted from it, the Rule adds.

§ 2. *In the place of prayer, as in the Choir or Church, none shall do any handy work, or other business, but only that which belongs to prayer, to the end that those who have a mind and leisure to pray there out of the times appointed, may not be hindered by them who should do any work there; and for this reason it is call'd an oratory.*

Our Lord heretofore cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple, saying. *My house shall be call'd a house of prayer.* Matt. 21. 13. To teach us that we ought to do nothing in the house of God but address our prayers, and discover our wants to him. It is for that, these sacred Edifices have been built; and the use they are designed for, is prayer. The church is the house of God and the

Gate

Gate of heaven: 't is there ſinners are reconciled by receiving the pardon of their faults: it is there the juſt are ſanctified more and more by fresh ſupplys of graces: it is there the Divine Miſteries are celebrated: and it is there the greateſt Sacraments are adminiſter'd. When Salomon dedicated the magnificent Temple, he had built; he with his knees on the ground, & his hands lifted up to heaven, ſaid: *Lord if thy people ſin to thee, and converted ſhall do penance, and beſeech thy name, and pray in this place, thou ſhalt hear from heaven, and be thou propitious to the ſin of thy people.* 2. Par. 6. 24. Therefore we muſt be very careful not to let any thing be done in this ſanctuary, which may either offend the eyes of the Divine Majeſty who reſides there, or diſtract thoſe who would pray there.

§ 2. *And when you pray to Almighty God with Pſalms and Hymns, let your heart be upon that which your mouth utters.*

Thoſe who ſing in the Church muſt endeavour always to join attention of mind to the ſound of the ſacred words they pronounce, that they may fulfill what the Apoſtle ſays: *I will pray in the ſpirit, and I will pray in the mind; I will ſing in the ſpirit, and I will ſing in the mind.* 1. Cor. 14. 15. For it is only when we meditate with attention on the words we pronounce, that perſeverance in prayer is follow'd by ſome profit. But alas! we often pray, and our mind is fixt elſewhere; we ſpeak, and do not ſo much as think of what we ſay: and it is that which makes our prayers unfruitfull; Almighty God not vouchſafing to harken to thoſe that are addreſſed to him, when thoſe that pray uſe no en-

endeavour to mind what they say.

This misfortune often happens by the malice of the devil: for that wicked and crafty spirit, incensed with fury and envy against us, knowing the advantage of prayer, and not being able to bear that God should do us the favour to hear us, he excites a croud of tumultuous thoughts in our imagination whilst we are in prayer; and he does it to take up our mind, disturb our attention, and so deprive us of the fruit we hoped to draw from our prayer. But we ought in these occasions to stand stoutly against the attacks of an enemy so full of wicked designes: and the more we feel our selves overtaken by this multitude of crouding thoughts, the more we ought to fortifie our souls, and persist with an undaunted courage in so holy an occupation.

Now to render our prayers pure, and to shelter them from these dan-

gers, a means as excellent as it is neceſſary, is to obſtain in all times and places, from doing any thing that is forbidden; keeping our tongue always from unprofitable diſcourſes, and our ears from hearing them; walking always in the law of God, and uſing our ſelves to follow his holy will with all our heart. For it neceſſarily follows that what we hear, what we ſee, what we ſay, and what we do often, returns often into our mind, and there takes place, even without our minding it, as in their proper and naturel dwelling.

§ 4. *You ſhall not ſing any other thing but what is ordained to be ſung, and what is not ordained ſhall not be ſung.*

It is not decent nor fiting that church-ſinging ſhould be diverſified according to the fancy of every new-comer: it ought to be kept firm

firm and invariable to what our forefathers have writen and ordained: the ſame may be ſaid of the other cuſtomes of the houſe, which ought to be regulated with authority and diſcretion. But if it should be requiſite to change or ordain any thing, that muſt not be done lightly nor haſtily, nor even as two or three shall have imagined or undertaken; but ſuch things muſt be treated of in an aſſembly of the community, and then difficulties are to be regulated and ſettled, as the moſt judicious part of the company canonically aſſembled, shall have determined. And we muſt know that in all occaſions where advice is to be taken, or a difficulty reſolved, it is better to follow Eccleſiaſtical authority than reaſon: becauſe to yield to authority is always an act of obedience and humility; whereas to follow ones own reaſon, is ſomtimes an effect of pride and preſumption.

tion. Now in a particular community as well as in a whole order what ought to be much eſteem'd is the acting alwayes with a great deal of ſolide maturity in imitation of S. Paul who ſaid, *did I uſe levity, or the things that I purpoſe, do I purpoſe them according to the flesh, that in me there may be YES and NO?* 2. Cor. 1. 17. That is to ſay ſomtimes one reſolution and Somtimes another: becauſe nothing ſuits better with the ſpirit of religion and the decency that ought to be obſerved in it, than conſtancy to what has been once ſettled and eſtabliſh'd.

CHAPTER IV.

Of faſting and Abſtenance, of meals and allowances.

§ 1. *Subdue your flesh and keep it under with faſting and abſtinence from meat and drink, as much as your health may bear.*

THe flesh luſteth againſt the ſpirit and the ſpirit againſt the flesh,

Galat. 5. 17. But for fear that in this ſtruggle (the deciſion of which is ſo important) the flesh should be the ſtrongeſt, and gain a fatal Victory, thoſe who would work their ſalvation ought to repreſs its ill deſires by the force of the ſpirit; becauſe when the flesh is thus tamed, then the ſpirit is renew'd and receives an encreaſe of vigour, but when the Rule adds, *as much as your health may bear*, it recommends the vertue of diſcretion, becauſe even our good works have no ſolidity if they are not accompany'd with this vertue. The meaſure then that we ought to obſerve in our faſting, is to ſubdue the flesh by abſtinence as much as its natural ſtrength can bear; becauſe on the one ſide he who afflicts his flesh to exceſs kills his own fellow citizen; and on the other, he who nourishes it with too much delicacy or abundance, maintains a domeſtick enemy. The exact

mean in this matter is, that we take ſuch care of the body as to keep up its ſtrength ſufficiently for the diſcharge of it's duties, but tame and afflict it enough to hinder its revolts, having ever in view this general Rule in all that we cut off by penance, to deſtroy the vices, & not kill the flesh.

§ 2. *If any of you cannot faſt, yet ſhall she take no food out of meal time, unleſs she is ſick.*

Gluttony which is the firſt among the ſeven deadly ſins is not alwayes occaſion'd by delicate and exquiſite fare; but it ſomtimes tempts us by the moſt common and vile things; for the firſt man was not tempted to eat ſwines flesh, but a ſimple apple. Eſau did not ſo greedily diſire a wild fowl but a meſs of potage: and our Lord himſelf in the deſert, was not tempted to eat meat,

but

but bread. Now this ſin is committed in three manners: the firſt is when one drinks and eats without moderation as to the quantity: the ſecond is ſeeking too great delicacy as to the quality: and the third is not ſtaying till the appointed meal-times.

The time in which we think we ought not to eat, laſts till the hour of tierce, becauſe it does not become perſons of our profeſſion to eat or drink before that hour, except we were ſick. As for the ſick they may do it at any hour, becauſe the law is not eſtabliſhed for the infirm: thoſe who do not faſt yet have health, as we underſtand, the time, they may take their repaſt, is from the hour of tierce till ſext; and for thoſe who faſt, from None till the Evening. The Apoſtle having recommended to us, *to do all things decently, and according to order.* 1. Cor. 14. 40. It is not enough

for

for us to observe an exact temperance in eating & drinking as to the quantity and quality, we must also subject our selves to the hours appointed, that we may not by our manner of life give occasion of scandal to any: for it would be a great disorder if we lived in a blameable manner, who by the engagement of our state, ought to exert the manner of living holily.

§ 3. *When you are set at table be ever attentive without noise or contention unto that, which according to your custome is read, until you rise from meal: and let not your mouth alone take meat, but let your hearing at the same time receive the word of God.*

To hungar after the word of God, is to desire to hear it: but all who hear or read holy books, are not so happy

happy as to profit by them; for there are many who remain afterwards as empty and as dry as they were before, they feel not any good motion, preſently loſe the Idea of what they have heard, and retain not any relish of that ſpirituall food. All that ſuch perſons hear, far from being to their advantage, it will but render their judgment more rigorous: whereas it is written of thoſe who are in a better diſpoſition; *Bleſſed are they that hungar and thirſt after Juſtice, for they ſhall be filld.* Matt. 5. 6. The reaſon why they shall be ſatiated, is becauſe they were hungry before, for it is by that very hungar that man is made worthy to be afterwards fill'd. The firſt thing then that we ought to do, is to endeavour to prepare our heart that it may feel that hungar and thirſt, which is the deſire of the word of God: and grace will not then fail to replenish us, and

and penetrate us interiourly with a celeſtial ſweetneſs, which will be to us an excellent nourishment; ſo that our joy will be to ſing with the royal Prophet. *How ſweet are thy words to my tongue, more than honey to my mouth.* Pſal. 118. 103. And again, *the law of thy mouth is good unto me above thouſands of gold and ſilver.* Pſal. 118. 73.

In our meals, it is not ſufficient to be ſeated at a material Table, we muſt alſo be preſent at a ſpiritual Table; it is not enough to give food to our body, we muſt give it alſo to our ſoul: nay as much as the ſoul ſurpaſſes the body in excellence and dignity, we ought to take more delight in the ſpiritual food than in the corporall. Every time we hear the holy Scripture read or expounded, we ought to think it is a ſpiritual nourishment, which Almighty God ſends us to ſtrengthen our hearts, to keep us from fainting in the way,

to make us able to reſiſt all the temptations of the devil, and to enable us to paſs over all the perils this corrupt age is ſo full of. we ought to have continual hungar of this divine food, and shut it up carefully in our ſoul that we may be able to ſay with the Prophet: *in my heart I have hid thy words, that I may not ſin to thee.* For he who thus hides the word of God in the bottom of his heart draws this advantage from it; it becomes to him a living and enlivening food, which defends him from the death of ſin, and alſo guides him to everlaſting life. It follows in the Rule.

§ 4. *When ſuch perſons as are by a former and conſtant ill health weak and ſickly, are allow'd better diet than the reſt, others who from a different ſtate of health are more ſtrong, muſt not be concern'd thereat, nor think it injuſt.*

It would be a great abuſe in a regular

gular houſe if thoſe who are moſt ſtrong and robuſt, should be concern'd or jealous, when they ſee that the weaker ſort are treated with more condeſcendancy: on the contrary ſince they have more ſtrength and better health, they ought to take upon them the rigour of abſtinence, and obſerve it exactly, compaſſionately bearing with the weakneſs of others.

§ 5. *Neither shall they think them more happy for having more allowed them, but rather be glad that they themſelves are able to paſs with that which others cannot.*

It is much more advantagious to abſtain from the uſe of many things and reduce our ſelves to a little, than to make uſe of a greater quantity to ſatisfie our wants; for that voluntary ſelf denyal is the effect of courage and vertue, where-

as the indulgence we grant our ſelves is a mark of infirmity. A perſon to whom Almighty God has given ſufficient ſtrength to be contented with the common life, who ſeeks neither delicacies nor ſuperfluities in his diet, has reaſon to rejoyce in his happyneſs, for the more the life he leads is ſtrict and auſtere by cuting off concupiſcence, which always takes a wide extent, the greater and more ſolide is his happyneſs, becauſe the ſtreight and narrow way is that which leads to life everlaſting. Rejoyce then all you who can reduce your ſelves for the love of Jeſus Chriſt to live upon a little; becauſe the frugal and auſtere life you lead has theſe advantages, it kills the vices, extinguishes the ardours of concupiſcence, nourishes the vertues, gives ſtrength to the mind, and an elevation to the ſoul which makes her capable of divine things.

§ 6. *And if unto those persons, who from a tender education came to the Monastry, there be given any food, cloathing, bedding, or such like necessaries, which unto the stronger, and therefore more happy persons, is not allow'd: they to whom it is not given, ought to consider how much the other persons are come down from their worldly way of living, althô as yet they are not able to go thorough with so slight and spare diet, as they who are stronger of body.*

Why all these reflexions? it is to the end we may be sensible how just it is that those who are of greater quality receive also somthing more than the rest; and that knowing the justice of such a proceeding, we cease to desire a distribution, to all without distinction, of the things we see given only to a small number; and at the same time

time learn to bear with the infirmities of thoſe who have leſs health and ſtrength; for it is thus the Rule explains it ſelf.

§ 7. *Neither ſhould they take it ill and be troubled becauſe they ſee ſuch perſons more tenderly treated, for they are not thereby more honoured, but rather more borne withall: for there would ariſe a deteſtable diſorder in the Monaſtry, if the rich and weak perſons were expoſed to all hardships and labour, and the ſtrong and laborious perſons of a mean condition, ſhould be made delicate and idle.*

It is a very deteſtable diſorder to have thoſe who ought to be accuſtomed to live poorly, forget their former condition ſo far as to ſeek delicate fare in a ſchoole of penance, where the rich forſake the ſweets of their firſt manner of life to lead a laborious one; I mean hard by

the rigours of penance. Nevertheleſs it is what happens but too often; for in the ſame communities where many labour with as much more fervour to debaſe themſelves and lead an auſtere life as bein noble and rich in the world they had lived in great delicacy, ſo there are others who by a diſorder directly oppoſite to the vertue of the former, ſeek to exalt themſelves, and ſatisfie their ſenſuality with as much greater heat, as they had been in the world more poor and contemptible.

This is what we call a diſorder that every one ought to abhor, an evil which is not leſs pernicious than deteſtable: that the poor forgetting their firſt condition, ſeek delights and repoſe, where the rich for the love of God labour to overcome themſelves by auſterities and abſtinence. What difference between them both! The firſt are ſlaves to

their belly, the ſecond ſeek what is advantagious to the ſpirit; thoſe by the wide and ſpacious ways of conveniences run to eternal torments, and theſe by the ſtreight and narron way of the croſs, advance towards an everlaſting Glory.

CHAPTER V.

Of looking to the ſick.

§ 1. *As it is neceſſary ſick perſons ſhould take leſs food not to overcharge their nature, ſo it is very reaſonable that they ſhould be ſo treated after their infirmity as that they may ſoon recover their ſtrength: and this is to be obſerved even in regard to ſuch as come to the Monaſtery from the moſt humbling poverty in the world, ſince ſickneſs has brought them to the ſame weakneſs as a former habit of ill health, or education, brought the rich.*

IN moſt diſeaſes much nourishment is ſo far from ſolaceing the

ſick, that they become worſe by it, and then it muſt be cut off, for fear of caſting the ſick into a ſtill more dangerous condition. But when they are free from their malady, they muſt be ſo treated that they may recover their ſtrength as ſoon as poſſible. Now in the ſolaces that are given to the ſick, and generally in all that concerns the neceſſities of life, there ought to be no exception of perſons, nor ought the poverty of any to be deſpiſed however great it were: becauſe the weakneſs that remains with the poor for a time after a fit of ſickneſs, puts them in the ſame condition the rich are in by education and cuſtome. Almighty God will be mercyful to thoſe who ſhew mercy to others, which is ſufficient to move us to prevent the wants of thoſe who could hardly have ſatisfied them in the world, ſince our Lord ſays, *bleſſed are the mercyfull*

for

for they ſhall find mercy.

The diſciple whom Jeſus loved, teaches us the ſame verity, when he writes. *He that ſhall have the ſubſtance of this world, and ſhall ſee his brother in need, and ſhall ſhut his bowels of compoſſion againſt him: how doth the charity of God abide in him?* 1. Jo. 3. 17. That is to ſay, if we would have the love of God in our ſelves we ought to practice the works of mercy towards our neighbours in their wants; being ſecure that when we do ſo, it is not ſo much to them that we render thoſe ſervices, as to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who will ſay to his Elect, In his judgment, *I was ſick and you viſited me, I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirſty, and you gave me to drinck.* Matt. 25. 35. 36. And who having recounted the other works of charity, they ſhall have paid him in the perſon of their brethren, which he looks upon as done to him-

himſelf, he will put them in poſſeſſion of the reward. Saying, *poſſeſs the kingdome prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Matt. 25. 34. To this ample recompenſe we are call'd, and when we render neceſſary aſſiſtances to our neigbour, we procure the kingdome of heaven for our ſelves: for tho' our good works, as well as the neceſſities of our neigbour, paſs away; yet the reward of them will laſt for eternity.

§ 2. *But as ſoon as the ſick perſons have recovered their ſtrength they muſt return to their more happy and wonted ſtreight manner of living.*

It is a happy cuſtome to be continually cutting off the carnal deſires which fight againſt the ſoul: it is a happy cuſtome to obſerve abſtinence and voluntarily deprive our ſelves of the uſe of many things: again I ſay it is a happy cuſtome

to chaſtiſe our body, and bring it into ſubjection. The Ru-

§ 3. *Which beſt becomes the ſervants of God. In as much as they need leſs, and not hanker after that better food, which was only neceſſary to reſtore them to their health.*

Some care of the body muſt neceſſarily be taken when it is actually infirm and ſufficient ſolace muſt be given it, to get out of that condition: but when it has recover'd ſtrength, that care muſt be laid aſide, for fear the ſervants of God ſhould be ſtop'd in the way to heaven, by the pleaſure of eating and drinking, and leaſt the intemperance of the mouth ſhould retain them ſtill upon earth in the very time, when they ought to think of nothing but elevating themſelves to God by the ſanctification of their ſouls. The more the health of the body encreaſes, the more im-

important it is to be watchful that we may not be ſurpriſed by the attracts of ſenſuality, which often accompanys eating and drinking; becauſe gluttony deſtroys all the vertues of the ſoul by the ſins it makes us commit. Neither do any come off victorious in ſpiritual conflicts if they have not firſt overcome the ſtings of the flesh in themſelves, by a wholſome mortification and affliction of the irregular appetites of gluttony: and none can ever keep firm enough to ſuſtain the aſſaults of this interiour war if they have not firſt overthrown the carnal and domeſtick enemy which is in themſelves; I mean the inordinate appetite of this vice; becauſe if we do not begin by entirely deſtroying the obſtacles which are neareſt to us, it will be in vain to undertake the conqueſt of thoſe which are more remote.

There are many who ignorant

of

of the order they should obſerve in theſe ſort of ſtrifes, which make the way of perfection ſo hard to nature, and ſparing themſelves in in the intemperance of the mouth, which is the firſt enemy they should defeat; yet undertake other conflicts of the ſpiritual life, and even ſomtimes do actions which are marks of a great courage. But being ſubject to ſenſuality, and overruled by the ſo unworthy and mean a pleaſure as eating and drinking, they loſe all the fruit of their generous actions, and neglecting to reſiſt the greedyneſs of their belly, and the concupiſcence of the flesh, they choak up all the great vertues they had endeavour'd to produce. The holy ſcripture ſpeaks of ſuch perſons when it tells us that the Maſter cook overthrew the walls of Jeruſalem: for that figure gives us to underſtand that it is the belly which deſtroys from top to bottom all the ver-

vertues which ſerved us for defence, when we once ceaſe to reſiſt it's appetites, and make our ſelves ſlaves to it's avidity.

In effect what made God's choſen people perish in the deſert, after he had freed them from the Egyptions ſervitude by ſo many prodigies? was it not the ſlight they made of Manna, and their gluttonous deſire to eat flesh? what cauſed Eſau to loſe the glory and the advantages of his birth right? was it not his greedyneſs of a poor meſs of potage? it is not, that food is evil in it ſelf, but gluttony is always vicious: for how often do we eat exquiſite things without offence; whereas in other occaſions we wound our conſcience by eating the moſt ordinary fare, let us content our ſelves then with what is neceſſary to maintain life, and not ſeek what ſenſuality deſires to flatter it's niceneſs.

§ 4. *Let every one think her ſelf moſt rich who is moſt able to ſuffer hardship.*

Sobriety, and a frugal life, have a wonderfull power to deſtroy the vices of the flesh: and thoſe vices being quell'd and mortified, preſently the beautifull vertues are ſeen to ſpring up which daily make new progreſs: and in this manner, thoſe who can moderate themſelves in the uſe of terrene things, grow rich in heavenly goods, and acquire treaſures of graces which recompenſe them to the hundred fold.

§ 5. *For 'tis better to need leſs than to require more.*

It is much better to ſuffer the want of ſomthing for the love of God, than to be in plenty which gives us beyond the neceſſary: becauſe the poverty which makes us want ſomthing to be more conformable

mable to Jeſus, produces humility in us, which is the ſource of all good, whereas abundance brings forth pride which is the begining of all evil. Now to the end that the ſervants of God may always repreſs ſenſuality in themſelves, and continually keep the appetites of the flesh ſubject to the diſires of the ſpirit, the leaſt they can do is to tend to this holy diſpoſition, and deſire even in food and clothing, to be leſs well provided for than neceſſity requires. For the exteriour man ought to be of our ſide in the affair of Salvation, and lend a hand to the good intentions of the interiour man, and thô he is carnal, he is capable of this: becauſe thô he has in him motions which incline to diſſolution and ſoftneſs, yet he has alſo ſeeds of good, and diſpoſitions for good works. Therefore our interiour man which is the chief, muſt do the office of an equi-

equitable Judge between himſelf and the exteriour man, and ſo order matters, that the exteriour man may have always ſtrength enough to ſerve him in the performance of his duties, and never enough to oppoſe his good intention freely.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Habit.

§ *I. You ſhall not be particular in your habit, neither ſhall you affect to pleaſe by your dreſs, but rather by your religious manners. Your kerchiefs ſhall not be ſo fine as that your caps may be ſeen through them; neither may you let your hair appear, either through negligence ſticking out, or put up in any ſet form on purpoſe.*

SAint Auguſtin gives us nothing here for Rule but what he practiced himſelf; for it is written in his life that his habit and ſhooes were

were neither too neat not too negligent, but decent, and equaly remote from either exceſs. We read alſo that he ſaid of himſelf: I own I am ashamed to wear too rich a garment; it does not ſuit with the profeſſion I have embraced, neither does it agree wth the obligation I have to give theſe rules, nor connect with this miſerable body which ought not to be ſo well clad, and I think it below a man of my great age. Jeſus Chriſt ſaid in the Goſpel: *behold they who are clad in ſoft apparel, are in the houſes of kings*: Matt. 11. 8. And he calld ſuch garments ſoft apparel becauſe they ſoften the ſouls of thoſe who wear them: but if it be agreable to ſee perſons ſo dreſs'd in the Palaces of kings, courſe attire which has an air of humility, is amiable in the church of Jeſus Chriſt. Such ought to be the habits of Prieſts and religious people, nothing of novelty, no tinc-

tincture of pride, nor air of vain glory: for ſuch perſons are not ſet off by the fineneſs of their habit, but by the purity of their manners, and innocency of their ſoul.

The ſpiritual ornaments are for us; with them we may imbellish our ſelves, they are chaſtity, meekneſs, obedience, patience, and charity: theſe are the ornaments which will make our ſoul amiable to the king of heaven, that that inviſible ſpouſe, who does not ſeek exteriour adornments and beauty but grace and vertue which are ſomthing interiour, as it is written: *all the beauty of the kings daughter is within.* Pſal. 44. 14. Let us then think of no other embellishments, nor beauty, nor riches, but that which is found in innocence and good works. For thô we should aſſemble in our ſelves all the other advantages, and should poſſeſs all that the world thinks lovely, yet we should not come

near the happyness of that soul to whom it is said in the canticles: *thou art all fair o my love and there is not a spot in thee.* Cant. 4. 7. Let us use all our might to become pleasing to the eyes of our divine saviour, thô we have not the happyness to see him yet; but let us endeavour to please him by our actions, and not by our dress, that we may fulfill this precept of the Apostle. *Do not conform your selves to this world, but be reform'd in the newness of your mind; for althô our outward* MAN *is liable to corruption; yet the inward* MAN *is renew'd from day to day*

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

Of modeſty in behaviour and purity.

§. 1. *When you go abroad you ſhall walk together, and when you come to the place you were going to, you ſhall remain together. In your walking, ſtanding, in your dreſs, and in all your behaviour and motions there muſt appear nothing that might tempt any one to evil, but what may ſuit with your holy profeſſion.*

The holy church in the perfect perſons who doubtleſs make her holyeſt portion upon earth, is not only beautifull in the ſight of Almighty God by the interiour ſplendor of piety and religion; but she has even ſufficient to pleaſe men alſo, by the exteriour grace which gives her the comlyneſs and de-

cency she obſerves in all things, according to that which is written: *and my flowers are fruits of honour and honeſty.* Eccl. 24. 25. Now it is a practice conformable to the ſpirit of religion, and to the decency with which all there, ought to be perform'd as in a ſchoole of perfection, that thoſe who live together walk out together, and ſtay together without ſeparating, that all may be done as the Apoſtle recommends, *decently and according to order.* 1. Cor. 41. 40.

One might alſo give a ſpiritual ſenſe to this corporal ſociety, and ſay that it repreſents the union of the ſaints which is compared to an Army rank'd for battle. For as an Army preparing to fight, takes care to be regular and cloſe in its ranks, that the enemy may not break into the battallions; ſo our ſpiritual Army ought by orders of its head, to be always cloſe to-

gether

gether, and very orderly, whether it marches or halts; and in that union which joins its forces, we find an advantage which terrifies the ancient enemy who makes war againſt us, and apprehends nothing ſo much in the ſervants of God, as the union of charity. The rule gives us here another important advice.

§ 2. *In all your behaviour and motions there muſt appear nothing that might tempt any one to evill; but what may ſuit with your holy profeſſion.*

Religious perſons ought to live with ſo much circumſpection that none may find in them juſt cauſe to blame their comportment. For it is contrary to all reaſon that thoſe, who by the engagement of their ſtate ought to exert the manner of living holily, should behave themſelves in ſuch a manner as to

deſerve the reproaches of all that ſee them; ſince to them is addreſs'd this ſentence: *be holy becauſe I am holy ſays the Lord your God.* Levit. 19. 2. We ought in reality to be ſaints ſince we bear a name, and wear a habit of ſanctity and religion, and are employ'd and apply'd to the divine ſervice, conſecrated to Jeſus Chriſt to ſerve him at his Altars, and ordained to celebrate his divine Miſterys. *Let men ſaid the Apoſtle, conſider us as Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, and as diſpenſers of the Miſteries of God.* 1. Cor. 3. 5. Remark that he does not recommend to us to be the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe he ſuppoſes we are ſo; but that we act ſo that men may conſider us as ſuch. And the reaſon why he ſpeaks thus is, becauſe it is not ſufficient that our life be holy and irreproachable; but our reputation muſt alſo be unblemish'd: for as much as our good life is neceſſary to our ſelves,

ſo much is our reputation and the eſteem of our vertue neceſſary to our neigbour, that we may convert him to God, this made the ſame Apoſtle ſay: *he muſt have a good teſtimony from thoſe who are without.* 1. Tim. 3. 7.

We muſt then ſo behave our ſelves, that our profeſſion may be remark'd in our works, and that our life may be conformable to the name we bear; that as the order we are of is holy, our converſation may be the ſame, and that when we are commended, the commendation may be grounded upon the teſtimony of our actions. But if you would know when our life is worthy of the holy ſtate we have embraced; it is when we keep our paſſions ſubject to reaſon by an exact diſcipline, which hinders their motions from being diſorderly: It is when we endeavour to become Maſters of our ſenſes, and keep them from all diſor-

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der and lightneſs. It is when our looks being pure, humble, and modeſt, are not fixt upon any object which we are forbidden to deſire. It is when our ears being chaſte and diſcreet, are deaf to all vain and ſuperfluous diſcourſes, and delight only in thoſe which move towards God. It is when our words ſeaſon'd with the ſalt of wiſdome, are never fluent in evil or unprofitable entertainments, but always inſinuate ſomthing profitable for the edification of thoſe who hear us. It is when we have purity in heart, modeſty in our countenance, gravity in our gate, circumſpection in our poſture, maturity in our geſtures, the ſpirit of religion in the air of our habit; ſo that ſanctity may shine in us on all ſides, decency regulate us in all things, and humility never forſake any of our actions. It is then I ſay, we exactly comply with this precept of our rule, „ that in all our motions

„ tions there muſt appear nothing
„ that might tempt any one to evil,
„ but what may ſuit with your holy
„ profeſſion.

§ 3. *If you chance to caſt your eyes upon men, you muſt beware not to fix them upon any one in particular; for you are not forbidden to ſee men when you go abroad but to take particular notice of any one; and to deſire to be taken particular notice of by him; is ever ſinfull.*

Our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt tells us in his Goſpel, *that whoſoever ſhall look on a woman to luſt after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* Matt. 5. 28. Now becauſe there needs but one evil look to excite this evill deſire, they who would be faithfull to God, and beware of offending that ſovereigne Maſter and dreadfull Judge, muſt of neceſſity redreſs the liberty of the

the eyes, that they may not be ſurpriſed by coucupiſcence and impurity. David whoſe ſanctity was ſo great, was overcome by an evil deſire, and fell into Adultery, becauſe he had fixt his eyes too much upon a woman, if then a man of ſuch eminent vertue had ſo fatal a fall for want of vigilance over his looks, how apprehenſive ought we to be of falling into the precipice of death and ſin, we who are ſo far from the ſanctity of this Prophet, whom Almighty God had found according to his heart.

Let us rather imitate the wiſe precaution of the holy man Job in what he ſays of himſelf: *I have made a covenant with my eyes that I would not ſo much as think of a virgin.* Job. 31. 1. This juſt and ſincere man perceiving, that, by the exteriour look, the ſoul might be corrupted, made an agreement with his eyes, that they might not ſo much as look by

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inconſideration or ſurpriſe upon objects, he could not deſire without ſin: becauſe it is impoſſible to overcome a vice entirely, if we do not moſt carefully avoid not only the cauſe of it, but what breeds the occaſion. This alſo was the reaſon why Lot flying from ſodome, the Angel who had freed him from it, expreſsly commanded him not to look behind him, nor to remain near that unfortunate Town, but to ſecure himſelf in the Mountain: becauſe he who would not perish in the fire of ſin, muſt keep himſelf far from the ſight and approaches of all which moves to the committing it, and ſtrive at the ſame time to mount to the top of the vertues, that his innocence may be as much more ſecure as by the effort of his vertue, and diſtance from the objects, he avoids the occaſions of loſing it. That which follows shews in what manner Looks are dangerous.

§ 4.

§ 4. *Becauſe not only by deeds but alſo by affection and matual glances, criminal deſires may be conceived on both ſides.*

As if he plainly ſaid, the ſenſible diſorders and irregularities of concupiſcence, are not only excited by that ſecret propenſity to evil, which is hidden at the bottom of the heart, but alſo they often take their riſe from looks which are ſomthing exteriour. We ſee it in the perſon of the royal Prophet, who having fixt his eyes upon a woman, thô he had lived till then in ſo holy a manner, yet he was dreadfully carry'd away by the temptation. *Death is come up thrô our windows.* Jerem. 9. 21. Said the Prophet Jeremie. The death of the ſoul is concupiſcence, our interiour houſe is our ſoul, and the windows of that houſe are the five ſenſes of our body. Now death aſcends by the win-

windows, and enters into our houſes, whenever concupiſcence, inſinuating it ſelf by our ſenſes, corrupts our heart and is the death of our ſoul. Now for fear that our ſpiritual life which is grace should die in us by irregular deſires, which are cauſed by exteriour objects, we muſt guard the windows of our houſe with ſo much care and vigilance, that we may keep onr paſſions in a calme; and this we may eaſily do, if we leave no paſſage open, by which the miſchief may enter our hearts to waſte and ſpoyl them.

That which follows in the rule gives great cauſe for fear.

§ 5. *How then can any one ſay she has a chaſte heart if she allows her eyes ſuch liberties? For a light eye is the Meſſenger of a light heart.*

That which is hidden at the bottom of the heart, is often diſcover'd by

by exteriour ſenſes, and by the compoſition of the body one may know what is the ſtate of the ſoul; but the ſin is much greater and harder to be cured when its corruption reaches to the outworks, and appears viſibly, than when it was incloſ'd within, and had not yet ſpread its contagion. Now as to impurity we muſt know that this vice is not alwayes the ſame; that ſomtimes it is ſpiritual, and at others carnal: the ſpiritual impurity paſſes only within by the pleaſure that ariſes from the fixt thought: carnal impurity is committed exteriourly by the ſenſes: for ſomtimes 'tis by ſeeing, at other times by hearing, or by words, or touching, or by the action it ſelf: for it is by all theſe deteſtable means, as by ſo many fire brands of hell, that the fire of voluptuouſneſs enflames a heart: it is by all theſe ways of darkneſs, the ſoul is ſeparated from God, all chaſtity and modeſty for-

forſakes a perſon, and the vice of luxury tyranizes within and without.

§ 6. *And if it should happen that the evil inclinatiou of the heart should be diſcover'd by the eye to each other, and concupiſcence move them to take pleaſure in ſinfull deſires; thô the tougue be ſilent, and the body remains chaſte, yet would the vertue of chaſtity depart from their ſoul.*

Chaſtity is ſo nice a vertue that it draws back, and if I may ſay ſo, it flys from the manners and all the exteriour compoſure, as ſoon as the Paſſion of concupiſcence is enflamed by reciprocal glances from perſons who delight in one another. And then, thô the integrity of the body be not violated by any diſhoneſt action, yet it may be ſaid that there is a violation by the ſight, by the deſire, by the thought, and by the pleaſure; all theſe things being like fiery

fiery fuel which encreaſes the ardour of concupiſcence, and raiſes it to a compleat malice. For the evil thought produces a pleaſure, that pleaſure wins conſent, conſent is ſoon follow'd by action, action paſſes into cuſtome, and cuſtome becomes a neceſſity or a law. It is the Apoſtle S. Paul, who has told us, that there is a law of ſin in our membres: for that law is doubtleſs the cuſtome we engage in by ſinning, and from which we cannot afterwards free our ſelves when we will, becauſe it retains us in ſlavery by the bands of neceſſity. The beſt way then is to correct the faults as ſoon as they begin to appear: becauſe if we ſuffer them either upon our own conſcience, or upon thoſe of the perſons we are obliged to rebuke, the leaſt evils thus neglected paſs ſoon to grieveous crimes, which draw down the wrath of God, as we learn by thoſe words of the Prophet, *they have pro-*

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longed their iniquity, and our juſt Lord will cut the necks of ſinners.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of keeping the ſight.

§ 1. *Whoſoever therefore does thus fix her eyes upon a man, and likes to be beheld by him in return, muſt not imagin ſhe is not ſeen to do it, ſhe is certainly ſeen, and even by thoſe ſhe leaſt ſuſpects.*

This we ſee often happens to thoſe who would hide their faults; for whilſt they imagin they only content their paſſions in ſecret, and think they have uſed the moſt vigilant precaution to conceal their diſorders, they unawares betray themſelves; and the evil they thought they had cover'd with the darkeſt obſcurity, appears viſibly to the eyes of all.

§ 2.

§ 2. *But put the case, she is not discover'd, nor seen by any living creature, what can she do to hide her fault from the sight of God, who beholds all things? Can she think that he sees it not, because the more patiently he suffers it the more he shews his divine wisdome?*

In all the faults we committ either by thought, word, or deed, let us fear with a religious dread, the eyes of that terrible judge before whom we are to appear: for thô we may somtimes escape the eyes of men, all is open and plain to those of God. Let us then forbear all sin without distinction of great and little, there not being any that can escape vengeance at the

the dreadfull day of judgment, if they are not expiated in this life. Let us alwayes oppoſe to the flames of ſin, the torments of hell, and continually ſtrive to extinguish in our hearts the love of vain pleaſures, by the thought of the ſmarting pains of the eternal fire. There is not certainly a more deplorable folly than that of a man, who to abandon himſelf for a moment to the pleaſure that ſolicites him, and to feed his paſſion with fleeting delights, renounces the ineffable joys of heaven, and plunges himſelf into everlaſting torments.

§ 3. *A Religious perſon then ought to fear his displeaſure, and not harbour the leaſt evil deſire of pleaſing man. For the holy Scripture cautions us in this point, by aſſuring us that* God abhors ſuch perſons as fix their eyes. *Abominatio eſt Domino defigens oculum.*

By theſe words it is certain that

if we fix our eyes upon a perſon of a different ſex to behold him too attentively, we become abominable in the ſight of God, whom alone it is important to pleaſe: and we may then expect nothing but torments from him who would have crown'd us with glory. Therefore if the love of God is not ſtrong enough to diſengage us from our evil inclinations, let his fear at leaſt do it; and if the heavenly joys have not charmes enough to invite us, let the eternal torments imprint in our hearts a wholſome dread: the fear to diſpleaſe our creator ſhould be the firſt ſtep we take to avoid ſin, or to get out of it.

But ſome perhaps will ſay what ſhall I do to excite in my ſelf the fear of God which I feel not the leaſt motion of? How ſhall I break the inſenſibility I am in as to his judgments? If you would open your heart to the fear of God, think

think often that he ſees all things, and that he has an infatigable attention upon you: when you feel ſome evil deſire riſe in your heart to corrupt it, think that Almighty God has that moment his eyes fixt upon you, and conſider what you are going about: when you perceive in your conſcience ſome diſordinate propenſity which begins to drag you to ſin, reflect that you are in the preſence of God, and he's a ſevere judge who from that moment examins the diſpoſition of your ſoul. So in all your actions, in all your words, in all your affairs, think of that divine eye which never ſleeps, and then you will fear to diſpleaſe ſo awfull a Majeſty before whom the Angels tremble. This is the way of Juſtice, this gives entrance to wiſdome, as it is writen. *The beginning of wiſdome is the fear of our Lord.* Eccl. 1. 16.

§ 4. *Whenſoever therefore you are together in the church, or elſewhere in the preſence of men, be ever carefnl to help one auother to keep your modeſty and religious chaſtity.*

The chaſtity wich the holy ſcripture ſo highly praiſes, is a vertue of an excellence and beauty which ſurpaſſes all that man's eloquence can ſay of it. It is a ſpiritual and celeſtial vertue, which alſo makes thoſe who poſſeſs it ſpiritual and celeſtial, whereas they would be carnal and terrene without it: it is a vertue which elevates us above the earth, makes us companions to the Angels, and unites us to Almighty God: it is a vertue which ſurpaſſes all the efforts of nature: and when a ſoul encompaſs'd with mortal flesh is ſo happy as to keep her ſelf pure, it is not ſo much

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the effect of a humane ſtrenth, as of a vertue all divine. The incomparable beauty of chaſtity makes our ſouls amiable to that inviſible ſpouſe, who delights in thoſe that are pure, and looks upon thoſe who are ſlaves to impurity, as objects of abomination. This vertue is not only beloved by God and his Angels, it is alſo cheris'd by men: the devil is the only who does not like to ſee it in us thô he knows the value of it. Therefore by frequent attacks he ſtrives to rob us of a treaſure which he cannot ſee in us without being tortured by the furies of envy. This wicked ſpirit is the infamous counſellor of all evil deſignes and of all filthy actions: he has no reſpect for perſons conſecrato God, he makes war with the Clerick who ſerves in the ſanctuary, he attacks the ſolitary who is shut up in his cloiſter; and what is ſtill more deplorable he ſomtimes gets

the better of a perſon whoſe vertue and religion was moſt admired.

We muſt then be infatigably vigilant to live ſo with one another that we may alwayes conſerve a very great purity, for if we loſe it we loſe all with it; and in loſing our God we are loſt our ſelves. Now what we aime at in living all together united in the ſame houſe, is to preſerve and guard each other by reciprocal correction, reprehenſion of faults, and inſtruction with mutual charity; ſo that what each could not do by himſelf, if he were left to his own management, he may accomplish by the aſſiſtance of others who lend him a hand. But becauſe when we are ſo happy as to keep our ſelves in the wayes of juſtice, the ſucceſs is not to be attributed to our ſtrength, as if we could do any thing of our ſelves, and that all the Glory is due to God. The rule adds this that follows.

§ 5. *For Almighty God who dwells within you, will thus by each others help preſerve and guard you.*

Whatever application we uſe on our ſides to ſecure our ſelves we labour in vain, if God himſelf does not ſuccour and preſerve us; this made the royal Prophet ſay: *If the Lord does not keep the citty, he watched in vain that keepeth it.* Pſal. 128. 2. It is the ſame with chaſtity, no body can preſerve it, neither in himſelf nor in others without the aſſiſtance of Almighty God: but if he vouchſafes by his grace to come and dwel in us, like that *ſtronger arm'd* Luk. 11. 21. we can do by him what we cannot effect by our ſelves. Therefore we muſt endeavour to be ſo faithfull in the practice of his commandments, that we abide in him, and he in us, and ſo perſevere till death in juſtice and chaſtity, by

by the Almighty power of him who, being God, liveth and reigneth for ever and ever Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

Of admonishing, and reforming our neighbour.

§ 1. *And if you perceive in any of your companions this liberty of sight of which I speak, immediately admonish her of it, that a speedy correction may hinder her from going on in what she had begun. But if you see, that after your admonishment, she does the same again thô at another time, whosoever finds it out, must not fail to make it known, and declare the person as one wounded, that she may be heal'd. The fault however must first be made evident to two or three, that by the testimony of two or three witnesses, she may be corrected with due chastisment.*

THis ordinance is very conformable to the words of the holy

ſcripture; for the Apoſtle ſays in expreſs termes, *brethren, if a man be preingaged in any fault, you that are ſpiritual, inſtruct ſuch a one in the ſpirit of mildneſs.* Gal. 6. 1. And our ſaviour himſelf ſays. *If thy brother hath ſin'd againſt thee go and reprehend him betwixt thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou ſhalt have gain'd thy brothor; but if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word may ſtand good.* Mat. 18. 15. If we are engaged in the conduct of others, we ought to uſe all poſſible care to diſcover faults and correct them: for if we do not apply a remedy to them in this world,† we ſhall there be engaged in that dreadfull condemnation, which the Apoſtle threatens us with, when he ſays, *it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Hebr. 10. 31. It is better alſo for the ſinner to be cor-

† We shal ſuffer the pain of it in the next and.

corrected in this life, while time is, than to perish in eternity when there will be no more hopes; and therefore the ſcripture gives us the love of correction as a mark of wiſdome. *Correct the wiſe man, and he will love you.* Prov. 7. 8.

But that is not an argument that it is never proper to reprehend thoſe who ſeem not diſpoſed to receive the correction; for the Apoſtle gives his Diſciple contrary documents by theſe words: *urge in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon.* 2. Cor. 4. 2. He orders it to be done in ſeaſon, for thoſe who willingly receive what is ſaid to them, and he will not have it omited even out of ſeaſon, for thoſe who by their good will would never give ear to reprehenſion, if they were not forced to it. Therefore we muſt not wonder if thoſe who have the charge of reprehending faults, think it ſomtimes their duty to be importune; becauſe that importunity is not an ef-

effect of anger, but a diſpenſation of charity. We alſo often ſee that thoſe who have yeilded to trouble and impatience when reprehended, upon better reflexion afterwards, when the emotion is paſt, conſidering with how much fraternal love the correction was made, feel a comfort in it, and labour themſelves to correct their faults.

§ 2. *Neither ought you to think your selves malicious or ill minded when you make known such faults, for truly you would not be blameless your selves, if by your silence you permited your sister to be lost, whom you might have reform'd by discovering her fault. Suppose one of your fellow-sisters had a wound in her body, which she would willingly keep secret, fearing an incision, would it not be cruelty in you to conceal it, and an act of charity to make it known? With how much more reason then ought you not to lay open her ill behaviour, least at leugth the corruption enter her heart?*

If a person is cruel who consents to keep secret her neigbour's bodily wound, how much more is that person so, who does not give notice of the wound of sin which

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is in the ſoul of her ſiſter? May we not ſay that she becomes guilty of her death, by that ſilence, and will be condemn'd for holding her peace, as the other will be for doing the evil? Let us then alſo ſay by a contrary argument, that she is truly animated by a ſpirit of charity and mercy, who does not conceal by ſilence the ſpiritual wounds of her neighbour, ſince we cannot practice a greater mercy towards a miſerable perſon, than to ſave his life when he is ready to loſe it. They who act ſo, will doubtleſs receive a great reward from the Almighty who ſays in the Goſpel; *Bleſſed are the mercyful, for they shal obtain mercy.* Matt. 5. 7. And who has alſo made one of his Apoſtles give us this important advice. *He who shall cauſe a ſinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall ſave that man's ſoul from death, and shall cover a multitude of ſins.* Jam. 5. 20.

See

See then the order that muſt be obſerved in diſcovering the faults we know.

§ 3. *Nevertheleſs before it be thus made known to others, who are to convict her, in caſe she denys the fault, it shall firſt be declared to the ſuperiour, when the perſon admonish'd has neglected to mend, that ſo by a ſecret correction she may reform her ſelf, and the fault be kept from the knowledge of others.*

When a fault is committed in ſecret, the guilty ought to be reprehended ſecretly by thoſe who know what has paſs'd: but if the perſon neglects to mind them, the ſuperiour ought to be acquainted with the matter, that she may alſo reprehend that perſon in ſecret; and that the fault may not be diſcover'd if it can be privately corrected. But if the perſon denys the fact, then let

let witneſſes be brought, that being convicted by them, she may be more ſeverely punish'd, as it is appointed in the ſequel of the rule.

§ 4. *But if she denys the fact, then shall more witneſſes be brought forth, that ſo she may not only be accuſed by one, but alſo convicted by two or three, and condemned to punishment, according to the appointment of the ſuperiour, or Prieſt, or the Bishop.*

Thoſe who will not change their lives for a gentle reprehenſion, ought to be chaſtiſed with more ſeverity: for the art of curing ſouls has this reſemblance with that of curing bodies, that, in each, sharp remedies muſt be applyed to the ſick, whatever pain they feel by them, when their

their wounds cannot be cured by more gentle fomentations. So when the ſinner will not amend his faults for the private advertiſments that are given him, he muſt be publickly reprehended, that however painfull it be to him, the evil may be openly remedy'd, ſince it could not be cured by more ſecret and gentle means.

As for thoſe who ſin publickly, it is evident that private correction is not ſufficient, but that they muſt be alſo publyckly reprehended: that being cured by confuſions, which others are witneſſes of, thoſe who have imitated them in the fault, may be advertiſed to amend themſelves alſo. This is the intention of the rule when it ordains, that, she who would not profit by ſecret admonishments, be publickly convicted of her fault, that she may then ſuffer punishment according to deſert.

§ 5.

§ 5. *And in caſe she refuſes the penance, and will not depart the community of her own accord, she shall be expell'd: for this is not cruelty but Charity in hindering her from ruining others, by her infecting ill Example.*

It is much better that this ſevere condemnation should fall upon one guilty perſon to ſave a great number, than to put the ſafety of a whole community in danger, by tolerating, thrô a weak condeſcendancy, the ill example of one only. It is to teach us to proceed in this manner, that our ſaviour ſays in the Goſpel; *If thy right eye ſcandaliſe thee, pluck it out and caſt it from thee: for it is better for thee that one member of thy body perish than that thy whole body be caſt into hell. And if thy right hand*

ſcandaliſe thee, cut it off and caſt it from thee. Matt. 5. 29. 30. By the right eye and right hand, we may underſtand thoſe of our friends whoſe ſervices are moſt agreable and moſt neceſſary to us. For he who ſerves us and has care of our affaires, is our eye, he who has the charge to provide us with things neceſſary for life, is our hand. And if it happens that each is uſeful to us in ſpiritual things, they are to us in place of the right eye and right hand. Nevertheleſs even ſuch perſons are not excepted from this law that our holy father has here eſtablsh'd, and they muſt be ſeparated from the body as well as others; that is to ſay, they muſt be cut off from the ſociety, like thoſe who are uſeleſs in it, if they ſchandaliſe their fellows, and are ſtumbling blocks to them in the ſervice of God: becauſe it is much better to be deprived of the ſervices of ſome particular perſon,

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than to let the whole body perish by the pernicious example of any one.

§ 6. *The ſame method, I here preſcribe for the correcting this fault of fixing the eyes upon men, ſhall alſo be obſerved in the remarking, admoniſhing, forbidding, declaring, convicting, and in the puniſhing of all other misdemeanours, with love ever to the perſon, and deteſtation of the offence.*

It is on this account that the ſame Doctor ſays in another place of his works, that we muſt in ſuch ſort love men as not to love their errours, that there is great difference to be made between what they are, and what they do; and in fine that we muſt love them, becauſe they are the work of God, and hate their errours, becauſe they are ſin. There are people enough

to be seen who sharply reprehend others, when they see them commit any fault; but it is often not so much thrô a motive of charity, as thrô a dislike for their persons: it is less to correct those faults than to satisfie the aversion they keep in their hearts: but such a severity being an effect of the spirit of revenge, and not of a zeal for Justice, does not mind to please God, who protests in the scripture. *That he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live* Ezech. 33. 11.

Let no body then ever reprehend another in anger, nor too tartly; but do it with mildness and charity: and even when the quality of the fault requires somthing hard in the words, let mildness be always in the heart. This is what S. Paul orders, by these words. *If any man be preingaged in any fault, you, that are spiri-*

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tual, inſtruct ſuch a one in the ſpirit of mildneſs, reflecting on thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted. Galat. 6. 1. For theſe laſt words are added as it were to ſay to us: you who reprehend others reflect what you are; think that you are alſo a ſinner, and lyable by your frailty to fall into all ſorts of exceſs: for fear that having reprehended your neigbour, you find your ſelf engaged in a ſtill more dangerous temptation, if you do it rather by a motion of anger than by a ſentiment of compaſſion. Reprehend faults then in the manner the rule ordains; that is, keep in your heart love and charity for the guilty, at the very time that you ſhew a zeal, and even hatred againſt the crime: becauſe we ought thus always to hate the one without ceaſing to love the other.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

Of receiving letters or tokens in secret.

§ 1. *But if any one should yeild so far to evil as to receive letters, or any little presents in secret, provided she confesses her fault of her own accord, she shall be spared, and prayer made for her.*

OUr holy Father treats as a great excess, the fault of a religious person who receives any thing without her superiours knowledge, because to hide thus, what one receives, or has already received, is to break order; and it is a great evil to become a prevaricator of the rules establish'd in the order we are engaged in. If the holy Prophet Eliseus had not been perswaded that his

his diſciple Giezi was fallen into a conſiderable ſin by ſecretly receiving preſents from Naaman Prince, and favorit to the king of Syria, he would not have ſtruck him with ſo horrid a leproſie: but he taught us by that terrible chaſtiſment with how much ſeverity ſuch faults ought to be punish'd. Yet if the guilty perſon confeſſes it of her ſelf, she muſt be pardon'd and prayed for: becauſe the evill that is diſcover'd by the humility of a voluntary confeſſion, becomes leſs, as David found by his own experience, when he ſpoke to Almighty God in theſe termes: *I ſaid I will confeſs againſt me my injuſtice to our Lord, and thou haſt forgiveu the impiety of my ſin.* Pſ. 31. 5.

§ 2. *But if she be taken in the fault, and convicted, then shall she be severely punish'd, according to the superiour's, the Priest's, or Bishop's discretion.*

Nothing more just than this ordination; for if the fault is greater, it also deserves a more severe correction: now a person who keeps secret the evill she has comitted sins in a grievious and mortal manner, augmenting by silence what she would have diminish'd by confessing it. The love which is pure and holy, says S. Jerome, is not acquainted with those *billets doux* which are reciprocally written and sent in secret; it is not maintain'd by those little presents which are mutually made: they that delight in such trifles, let themselves be surprised by a great vanity; and the more satisfaction they find in such

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mean things, the more they are rejected as to the poſſeſſion of thoſe which are truly great and ſublime. Thô theſe ſort of things ſeem of ſmal importance, yet they often produce very great harm; and perſons who are moved with a real deſire to avoid ſin entirely, will be very far from loving them: for ſuch will not content themſelves with only avoiding things which are evil of their own nature, but will alſo shun thoſe which might ſerve for temptation, or give others cauſe of miſtruſting their vertue. We then who have this double obligation of living holily for our ſelves, and of giving others edifying example, let us conſider, as below us, all theſe remiſs proceedings, thô there should be no other inconveniency in them than the breeding ſuſpicions diſadvantagious to the reputation we ought to have.

Chap-

CHAPTER XI.

Of keeping the cloathes in Common.

§ 1. *Your cloaths shall be kept in one certain place, under the custody of one or two, or of as many as may be sufficient to look well to them, and preserve them from the mothes. And as you all receive food out of one common cellary, so shall you all receive cloaths out of one common Wardrobe.*

THere is two reasons for this rule of having our habit kept in common, and trusted to the care of one or many persons. The first is, for fear that thrô neglect and want of care, they should be spoyl'd by mothes or otherways: the second, least we should think we possest as our own the very habit we wear, if we were allow'd to keep it apart.

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This explication conects with that which follows in the rule.

§ 2. *Moreover you muſt, as much as poſſible, not concern your ſelves about what is given you to put on, according to the ſeaſon, whether you receive what you left off, or what another had worne before, provided what is neceſſary for each, is not refuſed.*

This moderation which S. Auguſtin adds here, by ſaying, *as much as poſſible*, is to the end that if any one had great difficulty to perform this article of the rule, she might be permitted to have again the ſame habit she had left off. But it would be a mark of a much greater perfection, if a perſon were arrived to ſo generous a contempt of her ſelf as to ſmother all her repugnances, to be content with what is preciſely ne-

neceſſary for the body, and to be able to ſay with S. Paul: *Having food, and wherewith to be cover'd, with theſe we are content.* 1. Tim. 6. 8. This great Apoſtle does not ſay we are to be content provided we have things of a certain quality, or in a certain quantity; he only mentions what may ſuffice nature, thereby to inſtruct the imperfect, in whom ſenſuality always asks more than neceſſity requires.

Humane nature as S. Auguſtin ſays, is content with a little for its preconſervation; cuſtome adds much more, then ſenſuality over and above requires ſo much that it is almoſt impoſſible to ſatisfie it. Whereas if we loved God perfectly, and renounced the deſires of the flesh as we ought, we should even cut off as ſuperflous many things which in another diſpoſition would ſeem to us of an inevitable neceſſity. Let us then exerciſe our ſelves in the prac-

practices of loving God with all our heart, and endeavour by the efforts of that ſacred love, to be content with the neceſſary, and to cut off the ſuperfluous; ſo that if on the one ſide charity cauſes a diſtribution to each of the things they have need of, ſenſuality on the other may not make many require thoſe they might ſhift without. It is charity which ought to guide us in all things; now we know that this vertue does not ſeek her own intereſts, that she alwayes preferrs the common good before her own, that she makes one love to be little and low in the houſe of our Lord; and experience teaches us that if any one poſſeſſes that vertue in a perfect degree, far from granting her ſelf ſuperfluous conveniences, she will even find retrenchments to be made among thoſe which are thought neceſſary.

§ 3. *But if hereupon, contentions or murmurings arise among you, or any one should complain that she receives worse than she had before, and thinks much that she is not so well cloathed as her follow sisters; by* that *you may see how much you want of the interiour holy garment of your soul, who thus contend about the cloaths of your body.*

Our soul has need of its proper garment, as well as our body; and that garment incomparably beautyfull, is the grace of God when it environs her, it is the presence of the holy Ghost when he dwells in her, and it may be said that our heart is perfectly and richly clad when it has peace, charity, goodness humility, patience, concord, meekness, and all the other such like vertues: for we ought to reckon nothing our real riches but good

manners and the vertues, which are goods wholy interiour and ſpiritual. But if we begin to have diſputes with one another, if we grumble and quarell, our ſoul is preſently ſhamefully naked, and we remain unprovided of all the true goods; becauſe vertue and vice cannot live together in the ſame heart, and there needs *but a little leaven to corrupt the whole maſs.* Gal. 5. 9. Upon this each ought to examin her ſelf, and be very vigilant to find out how much her ſoul wants of all the vertues; there being no misfortune like to that in which a chriſtian engages, who for tranſitory things loſes thoſe, which would make him eternally happy.

There is then no ſelf intereſt which we muſt not ſacrifice, nor care which we are not obliged to take to avoid diſputes and quarrels, becauſe thoſe are the works of the flesh, of which the Apoſtle ſays, *that they who do*

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ſuch things ſhall not obtain the kingdome of heaven: Gal. 5. 21. And they are alſo the diſorders he would banish from the life of the faithful by theſe words; *do nothing out of ſtrife nor out of vain glory, but humility, looking upon others above your ſelves. Each of you not conſidering your own things, but thoſe that are another man's.* Phil. 2. 3. 4. There is not a more efficatious means to keep off quarels and maintain peace, than to think ones ſelf inferiour to every body and to ſeek rather the intereſts of others than our own: and for this effect we have need of humility and charity; becauſe theſe two vertues have the property that they not only never excite, differences, but even reconcile and bring back to concord thoſe who were moſt at variance.

The rule having admonish'd the moſt perfect and moſt advanced in the ways of God, ſtoops then in fa-

favour of the weak, and gives them precepts proportion'd to their condition.

§ 4. *However thô in conſideration of your frailty you receive the ſame which you had worne before, yet what you leave off ſhall be delivered up into the common wardrobe under the cuſtody of the perſons appointd thereunto.*

And this doubtleſs to the end that puting again into the ſame place, the habit and other things which we had received for our particular uſe, we may remember that they did not belong to us, even when we uſed them, but that they were as they are ſtill, common to all the reſt.

§ 5. *And this is to be obſerved to the end that no body may work any thing for her ſelf, either what belongs to cloathing, bedding, or other ſuch like neceſſaries. But let all your work be done in common, with a greater care and diligence, and more chearfully than if you work'd for your ſelves only: for it is written of charity that* she ſeeks not her own *wich gives us to underſtand that* Charity *prefers the common profit before private conveniency, and not conveniency before the common profit.* 1. Cor. 13. 5.

Saint Auguſtin here adds to the rule of common work, a paſſage of the Apoſtle's. Which confirms and ſupports it: for the reaſon why no body is to work for her ſelf, but all the works are to be done in common, and *that* with greater affection and a more ſenſible joy

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than if each work'd for her own uſe, is becauſe charity does not ſeek her own, but always prefers the common good before private conveniency. We cannot take a more excellent model of Charity in all things, than that of our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, ſince he has commanded us to do what he has done. If then thô he was Lord and Maſter, he did not ſeek his own, would it not be a great evil amongſt us, if any work'd for themſelves? And if, thô he had no need of men, being infinitly happy in himſelf he nevertheleſs preferred the common profit of men before his own; ought we not to do the common works with more fervour and joy than if they were our own in particular? Let us not have ſo little faith as to apprehend impoverishing our ſelves by this diſengagement: for the advantages we get by working thus in a ſpirit of Charity, incomparably ſurpaſſes all the conveniences we could gain in wor-

king by a ſpirit of propriety; ſince the eye cannot ſee nor the ear hear, nor the heart of man conceive the richneſs and magnificence of the treaſures that Almighty God prepares for thoſe who love him.

§ 6. *Wherefore you muſt know that the more you take care of the common good, the more you advance in perfection; becauſe charity which is permanent, thus is prefer'd before thoſe tranſitory things which we uſe for need in this life.*

The neceſſity of the preſent life which is to laſt but a time, and then paſs away, obliges us to uſe many temporal things, and even apply our ſelves to cares and ſtudies which are alſo tranſitory: but in all, Charity ought to have the upper hand and animate the whole conduct of our life, becauſe without

out it not any of our actions can be pleaſing to God. Charity is the Mother of the good works, the root of the vertues, the ſource of all goods, the highway to heaven, of which the Apoſtle ſaid : *I am going to ſhew you a more excellent way*, and more perfect. They make great progreſs in charity who excited by the love of Jeſus Chriſt deſpiſe all worldly things. Who are not moved with any deſire to reſerve the leaſt part of them, and who put all they have into the common ſtock to be diſtributed to the reſt of the community : ſuch I ſay walk and run in that moſt high and excellent way, who trampling upon all that is great and beautiful upon earth, have their hearts already in heaven, and only ſigh for the eternal goods.

Charity conſiſts in loving God and our neighbour. The love of God is expreſs'd in the ſcripture with three characters, or three actions

tions which ſo drains the whole ſtrength of man, that there remains nothing in him which is not ſubjected, and as it were enſlaved to divine love. For it commands us to love God, firſt, *with all our heart.* Matt. 22. 37. That is, to referr to Almighty God all the thoughts that are framed in it; ſecondy, *with all our mind;* that is to beſtow in the ſervice of God all that we have of diſcernment and reaſon: thirdly, *with all our ſoul*, that is, to make all that is in us of inclinations, affections, and powers, tend to God. The love of our neigbour has two duties which are of an equal obligation: the firſt is compriſed in theſe words of Tobias, *that which thou hateſt to be done to thee by another, ſee thou do it not to anther at any time.* Tob. 4. 16. And the ſecond in theſe, *all things therefore whatſoever you will that men do to you, do you alſo to them.* Matt. 7. 12. From this double

ble vertue contain'd in the love of our neighbour, ſprings all the others, by which we either deſire the things that ought to be deſired for the profit of our bretheren, or ſhun thoſe that ought to be avoided as hurtful to them. And by this we alſo know if we love our neighbour as he ought to be loved; when we prevent him by all the good offices we are capable of, and take care never to offend him by any injury. Therefore when the rule teaches us, that in all the things we uſe to ſatisfie neceſſity which is but tranſitory, charity which remains eternally muſt always be prefer'd; that is to ſay, in all our actions and in all our words, the love of God and our neighbour ought to ſerve us for rule, and generally in all the conduct of our life, charity should always enlighten us, always animate us, and always guide us: becauſe the fulfilling of theſe two precepts contains all

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that is written in the law and in the Prophets.

CHAPTER XII.

Of puting the gifts in Common.

§ 1. *Wherefore if any person either man or woman, give his Daughter, relations or friends settled in the Monastry a garment or any thing else belonging to bodily necessaries, it shall not be received secretly, but it shall be ever in the power of the superiour to put it into the Common, thence to give it out when it is wanted.*

IN the life we have embraced it is not allowable to receive any thing secretly, nor to keep it as our own; but that which has been given to any one in particular, must be put into the hands of the Superiour that she may give it to any that has

a greater want of it. There is no better means to extinguish avarice than to cut off the uſe all that might be ſuperflous. There is no ſecurer way to lead our Charity to a great perfection than to keep within the bounds of holy, poverty: becauſe it not being any more in our power to retain earthly goods, the ſoul which cannot be without ſome object to employ her, is obliged to replenish her ſelf with the heavenly. Yet there are perſons in religion who are ſtrangely troubled if they are not permited to keep for themſelves what others have given them; who love to receive little preſents; who delight to have things which are only theirs, and often thô they are but trifles, they are ſo fond of them, that to keep them to themſelves they are not affraid to diſturb the whole peace of a houſe.

So dangerous an evil can only be attributed to the malicious perſwa-

ſwaſion of the devil. That crafty and experienced enemy having ſo long made war with us, knows the manners, the diſpoſitions, and the inclinations of all men: he tempts all on the weakeſt ſide, and cares not whether it be in a great or a ſmal matter that he deceives them, ſo he can but ruin charity in them. We ought to be upon our guard, and uſe a continual vigillance againſt ſo malicious an enemy: we ought to ſquare our lives with ſo much wiſdome and precaution as to avoid the ſnares he lays for us on every ſide, and links to all ſorts of ſubjects: we ought couragiouſly to tread under foot by the vigour of the ſpirit, all the earthly things which may ſerve him as means to ſurpriſe us. Happy we, if we can at laſt ſing with the Prophet: *The ſnare of the fowler is broken, and we are deliver'd*; Pſal. 123. 7. But becauſe there are always ſome imprudent enough to

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let themſelves be catch'd in it, let us obſerve that which follows in the rule.

§ 2. *And if any perſon hides what is given her, she ſhall be corrected with ſuch punishment as belongs to theft.*

Thieves and robbers will not poſſeſs the kingdome of God, becauſe theft is a mortal ſin, and a crime expreſsly forbid by the law of God, which ſays: *thou ſhalt not commit adultery, thou ſhalt not ſteal, thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs.* Exod. 20. 14. Since theft is then put in the rank of the great crimes, and that the canons have ſo determin'd it, we muſt judge of this ſin as each would do of Adultery, murder, and falſe witneſs. And in effect! a religious perſon who hides and keeps ſecret, what has been given her, holds the place in the holy church that

that the traytor Judas had in the company of the Apostles. He was a thief and a robber who having in his hands his Master's money and the other things that were sent him, turn'd them to his own profit, and hid them. That unhappy wretch was carry'd away by such an excess of avarice, that when the devil had put it into his head, he sold his Lord and Master. But so passionately desiring a temporal gain, he fell into eternal death; and as it is said of him, he eagerly sought the possession of riches that he might live at his ease, and got nothing by it but a halter to hang himself. The fruits of avarice being then so fatal and so mortal, let persons consecrated to God renounce all desire of heaping up temporal things, and let them never keep secret any thing that has been given them, for fear that yielding to the suggestions of the devil, they commit a detestable sin; and

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of a juſt judgment of the Almighty God, fall into death, and incur eternal damnation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of washing the cloathes.

§ 1. *Your cloaths shall be wash'd at a certain time, according to the appointment of the ſuperiour, either by your ſelves or other perſons, ſo as that the over deſire of clean cloathes defile not inwardly your ſouls.*

Saint Auguſtin gives the reaſon himſelf, why he orders the cloaths to be wash'd according to the ſuperiour's appointment, and not according as each should deſire it: and that reaſon is, for fear the over deſire of clean cloaths should inwardly defile our ſouls: becauſe the

the more we waſh and cleanſe the outſide thrô a motive of vain glory, the more we defile and dirty the inward man. Superiours then ought to take care that their ſubjects do not ſin by too great an affectation of neat and clean cloaths: for it is not the beauty of the habit, but innocence of manners which adorns religious perſons. This was the advice S. Paul deſigned to give to every body when he wrote to the Romans, ſaying; *do not conform your ſelves to this world, but be reform'd in the newneſs of your mind.* Rom. 12. 2. For in reality thoſe who have ſo great a mind to have that exteriour beauty, which pleaſes the world, have no great deſire of that interiour beauty which is ſo pleaſing to God: and the more they affect outward graces, the leſs they care for thoſe of within. But would you know what is the true and ſpiritual neatneſs that God requires in us?

Iſaiah

Iſaiah teaches it by theſe words: *wash your ſelves, be clean, take away the evil of your cogitations from mine eyes.* Iſai. 1. 16. And the Goſpel does not ſay bleſſed are the clean of body, *but bleſſed are the clean of heart, for they ſhall ſee God.* Matt. 5. 8. Nevertheleſs for fear any, pushing theſe maxims too far, should imagin they ought alſo to cut off the neceſſary care of the body, it follows in the next chapter of the rule.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of Bathing.

§ 1. *Baths also for the body, when need is, shall not be refused, but permited at the usual time which is once a month. Yet if any person by reason, of infirmity, has need thereof sooner, it shall not be deferr'd: but let it be done without murmuring, and by the counsel of the Physician, and althô the sick person should not be willing, yet when the superiour commands, she shall do what is convenient for her health. On the other side, if the sick person desires what is not good for her, let not her will therein be fulfill'd.*

THis agrees with the words of the Apostle, who only forbids taking care of the body, so far as to content sensuality, but does

does not hinder the ſatisfying its neceſſity; and there is great difference between theſe two things. for that which proceeds from neceſſity ought to be conſider'd as being profitable and having a good end: but that which comes from ſenſuality, is always a vice and cannot be referr'd to God. There are auſtere perſons who pretend that in religion corporal medecines ought not to be uſed: but if they obſerve, that cannot be maintain'd, for when we eat, when we drink, when we cloath our ſelves, and uſe earthly things according to the neceſſity we have of them; they are as many remedies, and corporal medicines which we uſe againſt the incommodities and infermityes from which they ſecure us.

§ 2. *But let it be done without murmuring and by the counſel of the Phyſician.*

Saint Auguſtin very wiſely ordains

dains that in neceſſity even thoſe religious, who are not willing should be obliged to take ſuch ſort of ſolaces, and that thoſe should be hinder'd from them who have no need of them but ſeek them for ſenſuality ſake: becauſe it is a general rule, that we muſt yield to neceſſity, and not obey ſenſuality. But another reaſon he brings upon which he grounds his aſſertion, is, that, when a thing is pleaſing and flatters concupiſcence, we ſometimes fancy it will do good, whereas it can only cauſe harm: and that man lets himſelf be ſo cheated by ſenſuality, that he thinks to find ſolace in the very things which are pernicious to him. Therefore far from obeying ſenſuality we muſt rather miſtruſt it, as a deceitful enemy, which in ſuch ſort diſguiſes things, that it repreſents as good and profitable, thoſe which are hurtfull and ſometimes mortal. We need ſeek no other reaſons why holy

holy writ condemns concupiſcence in ſuch weighty termes, but becauſe it often drags men to death without their even perceiving it.

§ 3. *For ſometimes one thinks, that which is pleaſing good for health, whereas it is rather hurtfull.*

The Apoſtle teaches us to obſtain from carnal deſires which fight againſt the ſoul: becauſe in thoſe two parts which we are compoſed of, to wit the flesh and the ſpirit, there are different and oppoſite wills which make war and shock one another: but we muſt repreſs the diſorderly concupiſcence of the flesh by the wiſe ſeverity of the ſpirit. There are ſome who let themſelves be carry'd away by the rigour of the ſpirit, and others who give themſelves over to the ſoftneſs of the flesh by the exceſſive care they take of it. But both have need of correc-

tion, for the first desiring to mortifie their vices, and to live in a most spiritual manner, sometimes kill their flesh, not knowing that even vertue is changed into vice when it is not regulated by discretion. The others on the contrary delight to live in a carnal manner conformable to the senses, but under pretence of preserving their bodies, they at the same time nourish their passions, and strengthen their sensuality. There must then be bounds prescribed to these two sort of persons who are so very different: the rigide must be forced to do what is necessary for their health, and the remiss be hinder'd from having all that their sensuality craves; and to each may be said that health of body must be taken care of for the service of God, but that there's an obligation of cutting off evil desires which rise up against the fidelity we owe to his Divine Majesty.

§ 4.

§ 4 *Notwithſtanding if any one has any ſecret pain or diſeaſe in her body, and declares it; ſhe being the ſervant of God, ſhall be believed without miſtruſt.*

It is very reaſonable to believe without miſtruſt, thoſe whoſe good manners and holy life bear witneſs that they are ſervants of God; for it is not ſo much from the mouth of thoſe who ſpeak, as from their manner of life, that we get the knowledge of the truth, as our ſaviour himſelf aſſures us, ſaying: *by their fruits you ſhall know them.* Matt. 7. 20. Thoſe who ſerve God with fidelity, do not deceive men; there is neither duplicity nor diſſimulation in their words; they are not of the number of thoſe whoſe heart thinks one thing when their tongue aſſures the contrary: but they

are the ſame at the bottom of their conſcience as they ſeem to be on the brim of their lips: and whereas a wicked life in others makes one ſuſpect the very truth they affirm; ſo ſanctity of actions in theſe, gives an authority to what they ſay, which every one yields to. Therefore we ought to make no difficulty to believe thoſe whoſe conduct we have no reaſon to miſtruſt.

The following explication might alſo be given to this part of the rule. They who realy ſerve God, fear to offend him not only by actions, but alſo by words, and the good opinion we ought to have of their vertue makes us believe, that as we ſee them far from all actions which are not good, ſo they alſo forbear all words which are not true. This may ſerve us for an inſtruction to ſquare our lives in ſuch a manner, that our words may be believed without miſtruſt. For it is the good

life

life which gives weight to the words, and good deeds give teſtimony to the truth: as our Lord made appear in his own perſon when he ſaid to the Jews: *If you will not believe me give credit to my works.* Jo. 10. 38. And again, *the works which I do in the name of my father, they bear teſtimony concerning me.* Ibid. verſ. 25.

There are many people who are not believed even when they ſpeak truth; becauſe they are not regular in their manners, or give one cauſe to fear they are not: but as ſoon as our life begins to be ſo good, that it cannot be accuſed of guile, what we ſay is received by all as certainly true. The leſs a man has of vertue, the leſs he is believed; but on the contrary, the more irreproachable he becomes, the more credit is given to his words; but becauſe the infirmity a ſick perſon is reduced to, moves her ſometimes to deſire things which are contrary

trary to her cure, the rule adds.

§ 5. *And if it be uncertain whether that which the ſick perſon deſires be good for her health, let the Phiſician be conſulted.*

We muſt believe the ſick whoſe vertue we are acquainted with; but we muſt not for that preſently grant them all they deſire: becauſe the juſt themſelves are ſomtimes tempted with evil deſires. Therefore if it is not certain that what ſeems pleaſing to them, will be ſo good for them as they hope, it is fitting the Phiſician be conſulted; that is, ſome perſon who can decide the matter. And let none be ſcandaliſed here, with hearing us ſpeak of conſulting Phyſicians, ſince S. Paul himſelf counſell'd medicins, giving this preſcription to his Diſciple Timothy, in the firſt Epiſtle he addreſs'd to him *Drink not yet water: but*

but uſe a little wine for thy ſtomak's ſake and thy frequent infirmities. 1. Tim. 5. 23. This ſo wiſe and diſcreet a Maſter, moderates the rigour of his Diſciples abſtinence, for fear that ſinking under his frequent infirmities, he should want neceſſary ſtrength to keep up the Miniſtry of preaching, from which the faithfull had ſuch vaſte advantage. It was doubtleſs good for the diſciple in particular, to ſuffer the pains he was ſubject to, and ſo enrich himſelf with the fruits of patience: but the Apoſtle foreſaw that he would be more profitable to the church, if being a little fortified by the uſe of a proper remedy he ſet himſelf to gain ſouls to God. By this we learn that when many good things are offer'd, we muſt always chooſe thoſe which are moſt profitable: and it is upon this authority we ground our ſelves, when we ſay that we muſt have recourſe to corporal

poral medicinal remedies that we may afterwards bring forth greater fruits for our Lord.

§ 6. *But if it be judged neceſſary that ſuch perſons ſhould go to the baths or elſewhere, they ſhall not go leſs than three together, nor yet go with whom they themſelves would, but with whom the ſuperiour appoints.*

Saint Paul ſaid, *we take care to do good things not ouly in the ſight of God, but alſo in the ſight of men.* 2. Cor. 8. 21. A good conſcience is ſufficient for our ſelves, but for others we ought alſo to have a reputation exempt from reproach, which on all ſides diffuſes the ſweet odour of Jeſus Chriſt. He, who content with the ſecret teſtimony of his own conſcience, neglects his reputation, is cruel and unjuſt to his neighbour, whom

whom he deprives of his due, eſpecially if it is a perſon of high dignity, as was this diſciple to whom S. Paul wrote: *make your ſelf a living model of good works.* Or as ſaint Paul who ſaid of himſelf: *We are made a ſpectacle to the world, to Angels, and to men.* 1. Cor. 4. 9. Thoſe who love us ſeek vertues in us to ſatisfie their deſire of praiſing us, and that we may be the ſubject of the honour they would render us; and on the contrary thoſe, who do not love us, take hold of all that's amiſs in our behaviour to ſpeak diſadvantagiouſly of us. But we who are between theſe two ſort of poeple, ought with the aſſiſtance of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo to conſerve our conſcience, and keep up our reputation, that our friends may never blush for the honour they do us; and that our very enemies may be forced to own that there's nothing blameable in us; but that our life

life is worthy of praiſe. We muſt then go two or three together when we go abroad, not only to have the comfort of being thus accompany'd, but alſo to give credit to our reputation by the certain teſtimonials of the innocence of our life. To this the wiſe man exhorts us when he ſays: *Woe be to him that is alone, becauſe when he falleth he hath none to lift him up; and if two ſleep together, they ſhall warm each other: but one alone, how ſhall he be warm'd?* Eccl. 4. 10. As for that which is added in the rule: they ſhall not go with whom they themſelves would, but with whom the ſuperiour appoints, there is two advantages in this order, the firſt is, that the ſuperiour by this means may have an eye to the ſecurity of the perſons she muſt anſwer for, and that the inferiours may thereby practice obedience.

Chap-

CHAPTER XV.

Of the infirmarian and other Officers.

§ 1. *The care of the ſick who either are upon recovery, or lye under any infirmity, or are attack'd with a feavour, an Ague, or the like, ſhall be committed to ſome one perſon, who ſhall ask of the cellariſte what she ſees neceſſary for the ſick.*

THer muſt be one of the religious choſen, who fearing God, may take great care of the ſick, ſtudying to give them all that is neceſſary, and ſerving them with as great affection and Zeal as if they render'd thoſe ſervices to our ſaviour himſelf in perſon. For it will be himſelf who will ſay when he judges us; *I was ſick and you viſited me:* and again, *Amen I ſay to you, in*

as much as you did it to one of these least of my brethren, you have done it to me. Matt. 25. 36. 40. The strongest persons ought to bear the weakness of the infirm, and not despise the sick for the disgust that is found in serving them: for thus is put in practice the most divine vertue of charity, to which the Apostle exhorts us saying: *bear one anothers burthens, and so shall you fulfill the law of Christ.* Gal. 6. 2. That law of Christ is love, the office of love is to make us bear one anothers burthens, and the different infirmities which happen sometimes to one sometimes to another, offer us the occasions of thus reciprocally supporting each other: which is the greatest mark of fidelity and friendship that can be received and given. But on the other side let those to whom all these assistances are render'd for the love of God, reflect that it is for charity's sake they are ser-

ſerved with ſo much care, and avoid as much as poſſible the afflicting and overcharging thoſe who ſerve them, by their impatiences, and the many ſuperfluous ſervices they will have render'd them. Let them on the contrary humble themſelves, and return thanks to Almighty God for the charity they receive: for fear the ſickneſs which was ſent to purifie their ſouls, ſerve only to make them fall into more conſiderable faults.

§ 2. *And ſuch as are officers of the Cellary, of the Wardrobe, or of the Library, muſt ſerve their ſiſters mildly without murmuring.*

That is to ſay, let thoſe to whom the charge of theſe things are committed, carry themſelves in ſuch a manner, and ſerve the religious with ſo much charity, that they may not offend God by performing their

their offices with murmuration, or by moving others to impatience by their careleſsneſs. That ſort of grumbling impatient complaint which is call'd murmuration, is a great ſin. For according to S. Gregory, theſe two things are impoſſible, that murmurers ſhould enter the kingdome of heaven, or that thoſe ſhould murmure who are in that ſeat of bliſs. The wiſe man has before hand given us an embleme but little advantagious for all thoſe, who in regular ſocieties not having yet mortified their carnal deſires, are continually complaining, and find in all things matter for complaint. *The heart of a fool*, ſays he, *is like ye wheel of a cart*, loaded with hay, which creaks as it goes with a kind of murmuration. To ſuch imperfect perſons the Apoſtle S. Paul ſays: *neither murmur ye as ſome of them murmured, and perish'd by the deſtroyer.* 1. Cor. 10. 10. And 'tis alſo

alſo for their inſtruction ſignified in the books of Moyſes that God ſent fiery ſerpents againſt the people who had murmur'd at that holy Patriarch. And why, do you think he made uſe of ſerpents to punish thoſe guilty people, if not becauſe the ſerpent is a creature full of venome, and they that murmur have the devils venome upon their tongues? We may well ſay ſo, ſince the Apoſtle S. James has ſaid it before us: *The tongue no man can tame; an unquiet evil full of deadly poiſon.* Jam: 3. 8. Let us then beware of thoſe ſmart and impatient complaints which we know the danger of, for fear the devil's poyſon ſhould cauſe our death and we perish for ever by ſuch dangerous wounds.

§ 3. *The books ſhall be ask'd at a certain hour of the day, and whoſoever demands them out of the time appointed, ſhall not have them.*

Saint Auguſtin has already recommended prayer to us at the hours and times appointed. He has alſo advertiſed us of the common work by theſe words; let no one work for her ſelf, but all your work ſhall be done in common. Here he teaches us to diſtinguish the times for prayer reading and work. For theſe are three pious exerciſes which the rule appoints us as very neceſſary for the ſalvation of our ſouls: prayer becauſe it purifies us, reading becauſe it inſtructs us: and work, becauſe it is alſo a particular ſource of happyneſs, as the holy Ghoſt tells us in the Pſalms, in theſe termes. *You are happy becauſe you ſhall eat the*

the labours of your hands, and it ſhall be well with you, to live in this manner. Pſal. 127. 2.

Now this holy Doctor by ordering us to ask the books daily, ſhews that he intends we ſhould read often: and indeed the ſervants of God ought to apply themſelves to frequent lectures, becauſe they get three conſiderable advantages by it. The firſt is they learn what things they ought to avoid: the ſecond, they are inſtructed in thoſe they ought to practice: and the third, they diſcover the mark they are to aime at for the attaining their ſalvation. The roial Prophet was well acquainted with the value of this holy occupation when he ſaid to Almighty God, *thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my pathes.* Pſal. 118. 105. For reading encreaſes the light of the mind, and clears the diſcerning faculty, reading prepares us for prayer, and teaches us what

we should ask in it: reading encourages us to work, and makes us bear the fatigues of it: prayer makes us fit for the exerciſes of the contemplative life, and formes us for thoſe of the active life. In fine one may always apply to a perſon who perſeveres in the reading of good books, what the church ſings in the firſt of the Pſalms: *Bleſſed is the man that will meditate in the law of the Lord day and night.* Plal. 1. 26.

Prayer, reading, and work, are invincible arms which the devil cannot reſiſt; they are ſecure means to procure an eternal happyneſs; they are inſtruments of an admirable proportion to perform the great work of eternal ſalvation; they are bright weapons which ſerve to curb all ſort of vices. What shall I ſay more? Prayer, reading, and work, are celeſtial and divine aliments which nourish the vertues, and make them grow

in our ſouls. If you addict your ſelf to frequent lectures you will thereby at once learn what you ought to do your ſelf in order to live holily, and what you are to teach others, to move them to vertue. But remark nevertheleſs that to give this exerciſe its due utility, we muſt not go from reading to idleneſs, but to manual work; becauſe idleneſs is the enemy of the ſoul, and the ancient enemy of mankind eaſily throws a perſon into vice whom he finds neither praying nor reading. But when in the intervalle of both we employ our ſelves in manual works, how great is the profit of that holy practiſe? By mortifying the flesh we deſtroy that which ſerves for food to ſin; we find wherewith to ſatisfie our own wants, and have ſtill enough left to ſolace our neighbour in his neceſſities.

§ 4. *But as for your habit or shoes, when any one has need thereof, they who have them in keeping shall not delay to give them to those who ask for them.*

It has been already said that those who have offices must serve their sisters mildly without murmuring: for fear that deferring to give them what is necessary they make them lose patience and peace, be the occasion of their sinning by murmurations. Let them force themselves to serve their companions for the love of God: let them give them what they want in due time, let them even do it as we say, without repining, without shewing the least ill humour, without puting them off from time to time; but in an obliging manner, and chearfully, because it is written: *God loveth a chearful giver.* 2 C. 9 7.

Let

Let them for that effect have a proviſion of all the things that are to be given according to the means of the houſe, the ſpirit of the order, and the plenty or ſcarcity of the place they live in; to the end that thoſe who ſerve the reſt having regard to all things, may receive a greater reward from Almighty God. The habit and shoes of religious people should be conformable to a moderate decency, neither of too high a price, nor too fine and nice; neither by contrary exceſs should they be too vile, nor too clumſie; let them not be shap'd in forme and figure too affectedly; nor yet too careleſſly made; the moſt exact rule that can be obſerved in all that concerns the habit being, that it have an air of ſimplicity and decency, of religion and comelyneſs.

Let thoſe then, to whom neceſſary things are to be given, take heed

heed of asking with too much earneſtneſs and importunety, thoſe which would not be ſuitable to thier ſtate; becauſe all they should thus have of ſuperflous, would become a ſubject of death to them. Let them ſeriouſly reflect that the things they uſe and wear out, are offrings which the faithfull have preſented to Almighty God to redeem their ſins: therefore they muſt not uſe them in a diſpoſition of vain glory or pride; but rather with fear, taking to themſelves that which is ſaid to the Prieſts in the ancient Teſtament: *The hoſt is given you, to the end you bear the ſins of the people.* Levit. 11. 17. Let them know that they are obliged to be ſolicitous with great humility and zeal for the ſalvation of the perſons whoſe offerings furnish them with the conveniences of live, and that they cannot omit this duty, without expoſing themſelves to great danger.

Now

Now it is more ſecure for the ſalvation of the poor of Jeſus Chriſt, to want ſomething always, than to have too great plenty: for how can we pretend to Evangelical poverty if we do not patiently ſuffer ſome want for the love of God? On the other ſide how ſhall we expiate our ſins if we don't take care to cut off the uſe of allowable things proportionable to the forbidden actions we have committed? We muſt of neceſſity enter the narrow gate, if we would attain to that ſpacious extent of the heavenly joies: and we ought always to have in mind that the more auſtere our life ſhall be here, the more the glory we ſhall poſſeſs in heaven, will be accompany'd with ineffable ſweetneſs.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of avoiding contention.

Let there be no contention among you, or at leaſt let it ſoon be ended, leſt a little anger might grow into hatred, and ſo make of a mote, a beam, and render the ſoul guilty of murder: for we read in the holy ſcripture that he who hates his brother is murderer. Qui odit fratrem ſuum homicida eſt; 1. Joan. 3. 17. *Which words appertain not only to men, but under the name of* man, *who was firſt created, the ſame precept is alſo intended for women.*

THus the vices make great progreſs by little, and little for when we will not reſtrain the liberty of our tongue as to unprofitable words, we afterwards ſpeak others, which are realy evil. For ſometimes we fall

fall into murmurings, ſometimes we paſs to detractions, ſometimes we excite conteſtations and quarrels, which beginning by anger, lead us at laſt to formal hatreds. This is what the wiſe man has remark'd, *he that contemneth ſmall things ſhall fall by little into greater.* Eccl. 19. 2. So that one ſin ſpringing from another by an unhappy fecundity, the iniquity is ſtretch'd out and lengthen'd ſo far, as to bind us on all ſides; and drag us to our ruin. *Woe be to you that draw iniquity in cords of vanity.* Iſai. 5. 18. ſaid the Prophei Iſai: and the royal Prophet, *They have prolong'd their iniquity, our juſt Lord will cut the necks of ſinners.* Pſal. 128. 3.

Our firſt care ought to be, not to commit any ſin whatſoever; becauſe it is more advantagious to take heed, and not to fall into it, than to correct it when committed. But if thrô frailty we happen to fall into ſome fault,

fault, we ought to do our beſt to riſe again, and to get out of it by a real amendment, and the ſooner we go about it, the eaſyer it will be to us. This is what our Lord would teach us, when he ſaid to the ſerpent ſpeaking of the woman, he had deceived, *She ſhall bruiſe thy head in pieces.* Geneſ. 3. 15. For, to correct ſin as ſoon as it is committed, is to crush the head of the ſerpent. And thence we learn that as ſoon as we perceive our fault, the moſt ſecure and beſt way for us, is to riſe again upon the ſpot, without deferring our converſion by delays, which will only ſerve to make it more hard and difficult.

There is as much difference between anger and hatred, as there is between a mote and a beam. Hatred is properly an old anger: for anger is changed into hatred when the ill will, the reſentment, and the contempt which at firſt was but paſ-

paſſing, and as one may ſay, only took up the ſurface of the heart; ſtays ſtill, even after the emotion is paſt; and remains long enough to take deep roots, and to a degree of malice, that neither reaſon nor time can correct. You may ſometimes find excuſes for anger, as when you are only angry to correct thoſe who are under your charge; but you can never be without ſin when you hate any one, becauſe hatred does not tend to better the perſon, but deſtroy him. Anger has this evil that it troubles the eye of the ſoul, this is eaſily known, for that a man poſſeſt by this paſſion, does not find out till after he is freed from it, how unjuſt his thoughts were, whatever reaſon he thought he had. But hatred goes ſtill further, and is much more fatal, for it entirely extinguiſhes the light of our ſoul, as the beloved diſciple teaches us, who ſays;

says: *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.* 1. Jo. 1. 9. To avoid all these misfortunes, let us strive to resist even the first motions of anger, however just they seem to be; and as soon as we feel our selves moved, let us presently endeavour to regain our first calmness; because these emotions and impatiences, if not appeased, quickly change into aversion and hatred against the person, we would not forgive soon enough.

Chap-

CHAPTER XVII.

Of Reconcilation.

§ 1. *Whoſoever ſhould offend another by injurious language, by evil wiſhes, or by reproaching her of any former fault, ſhe ſhall be careful to make amends by dne ſatisfaction as ſoon as poſſible; and the party injured muſt pardon the offence without making words.*

THey do very ill who offend others by injurious language, ſince the Apoſtle ſays: *Railers ſhall not poſſeſs the kingdome of heaven*; 1. Cor. 6. 10. And before him our ſaviour had already pronounced this ſentence: *Whoſoever ſhall ſay thou fool, ſhall be guilty of hell fire.* Mat. 5. 22. As then, perſons who have

have offended in this manner, have committed a great fault, they ought to perform a great penance, ask pardon with all their hearts, much regreat, and a profound humility, of those they have offended, and the injured persons ought to pardon the offence without reproaches, or disputes. A christian who is a great while before he will be reconciled to his brother, is also a long time before he appeases Almighty God in his own regard; and he in vain seeks to return to the grace and favour of his creator, after having offended him, if he neglects speedily to appease his neighbour, whom he has injured.

There are some who confiding in their own merits, and thinking they have no great faults upon their conscience, on that account are very close and reserved towards those who offend them, and are more hard and slow in pardoning injuries: but

but to ſuch perſons it ſignifies nothing their not having other great faults, if they are not diſpoſed to forgive the injuries that are done them, ſince the delay of reconciliation is of it ſelf a great ſin. That ſervant of the Goſpel who owed his Maſter ten thouſand talents having expreſs'd a grief which moved his Lord to compaſſion, preſently obtain'd the entire remiſſion of all that great ſum; but becauſe he would not alſo forgive his fellow ſervant the hundred pence he owed him, he was put into the hands of the executioners to be tormented till he had paid the ten thouſand talents which had been forgiven him. A terrible example which muſt teach us that if we do not heartily forgive the faults that are committed againſt us, Almighty God will require a new account of the paſt, and make us ſuffer the pain of the ſins for which we had done penance

and rejoyced for having obtained the pardon of them.

§ 2. *But in case both have offended each other, they both must mutually pardon one another: the reason of this is, that you may be duely disposed for prayer, which the oftener you frequent, the more holy it should be.*

We daily say to Almighty God: *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* Mat. 6. 12. If then we do not forgive the injustices that are done us, this conditional prayer convicts us as criminal, and turns to our own damage: it irritates the divine anger against us: it draws down his malediction upon our heads in place of his benediction: and thence it happens that the prayer which should be to us a source of salvation, becomes the cause of our perdition; because instead of dimi-

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niſhing the number of our ſins, it rather encreaſes their weight, and makes us unworthy of pardon.

As for light faults which have no ill conſequences, and which we daily committ; thoſe faults, I ſay, which attend our preſent life, the prayer which the faithfull daily make, is alſo a ſatisfaction which expiates them. They have right to make this prayer, and to ſay: *Our Father who art in heaven*, Mat. 6. 9. Since they are truly the children of this heavenly Father, by the ſecond birth they have received from the water and from the holy Ghoſt. Now this prayer entirely blots out thoſe daily ſins which are call'd the ſmalleſt: it alſo even effaces the remainders of great ſins in thoſe who having for ſome time lead a criminal life, have forſaken it by a real penance; and therefore the uſe of it is excellent for all thoſe who will take care of their ſalvation. But as

we ſpeak according to the truth when we ſay. *Forgive us our debts*, Mat. 6. 12. becauſe as we have always ſins, the pardon of them is neceſſary for us; ſo we muſt with truth ſay, *we forgive our debtors*, Ibid. And let our actions agree with our words. Acting in this manner will be as an Alms we give to our neighbour; for there are many ſorts of Alms which are powerful to remitt ſins: but none more conſiderable, nor a greater efficacy, than this charity by which we pardon injuries; for in reality it is the moſt excellent Almns we can give, to beſtow our heart upon him that asks it, after having grieveouſly offended us.

It is not a very rare vertue to wish well, or even to do good to one who has never done us any harm: but to love our enemy, to wish him well who would willingly do us a miſchief, is the mark of a much greater ſanctity, and of a ver-

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tue much more generous, becauſe it makes us the diſciples, and perfect imitators of Jeſus Chriſt, who has ſaid: *Love your enemies, do good to thoſe that hate you: and pray for thoſe who perſecute you, and utter calumnies againſt you.* Matt. 5. 44. So high a vertue belongs to thoſe children of God who have attain'd to perfection; and certainly ther's none of the faithfull who are not obliged to aime at this happy ſtate, and to direct their prayers, their good works, and their conflicts, to acquire this excellent diſpoſition of heart. But becauſe ſo conſiderable a bleſſing is not common to that great number of people who pray in the ſame termes, and who nevertheleſs we believe to be favorably heard when they ſay, *forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*; Mat. 6. 12. We muſt ſuppoſe that the conditional words of this prayer, have their effect, and are fulfill'd

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at leaſt in ſome degree, when a perſon who is not yet perfect enough to love his enemy, yet freely pardons the injuries he has received, when the offender asks it: for that is all' we ask of Almighty God when we ſay. *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.* Ibid. Since theſe words mean no other thing, but forgive us our ſins when we beſeech you to pardon them, as we forgive thoſe who have offended us, when they ask pardon for the injuries they have done us.

As for thoſe who goe to beg pardon of the perſons they have offended and who humble themſelves before them, this muſt be ſaid in their favour, that ſince they are ſo concern'd, and repentant of the harm they have done, as to reſolve upon humbly asking pardon, they ought not to be conſider'd ſo much as enemies, ſince they are no more ſo; neither ought we to have

the ſame difficulty to love them in that condition, as, when they acted and behaved as enemies. Now whoſoever does not forgive with all his heart a repentant offender, who asks pardon for the offence, muſt not in any ſort hope that Almighty God will harken to him, and forgive him his offences, for it is impoſſible for truth to belye her ſelf, and she has ſaid: *if you forgive others their offenſes, your heavenly father will alſo forgive you your ſins. But if you will not pardon men, neither will your father pardon you your ſins.* Matt. 6. 15. 13.

§ 3. *But a perſon who is often tempted to anger, and as ſpeedily asks pardon of the party she acknowledges she has injured, is better than one who is not ſo ſoon moved to anger and yet is more hardly inclined to ask pardon.*

Some are more eaſily moved to anger than others, but they are alſo

alſo appeaſed with more facility: there are other on the contrary who are not ſoon moved to anger, but then it remains longer with them: there are alſo ſome (which is much more dangerous) who preſently take fire, and are not appeaſed in a long time; and there are of thoſe who are not ſo ſoon angry, and yet are very eaſily pacified. Now among all theſe, the judicious reader may plainly ſee that the laſt comes nearer than the firſt to the happy ſtate of peace and tranquillity, and that the third ſurpaſs the ſecond in malice. What miſchiefs ſhower down upon us when we let this furious paſſion domineer! Anger defaces the image of God in us by making us loſe meekneſs which is a ſtroke of his reſemblance. Anger makes us go out of the ways of Juſtice, as it is written: *a man's anger worketh not the Juſtice of God.* Jam. 1. 20. Anger de-

deprives us of all the benediction and advantage of living in a community: which made the wiſe man ſay: *be not friend to an angry man, leſt perhaps thou learn his pathes, and take ſcandal to thy ſoul.* Prov. 22. 24. In fine anger makes us unworthy of the ſociety of men: for he that knows not how to moderate his paſſions by the reaſon Almighty God has given to all men, ought to be deprived of their company, and live alone like the beaſts.

A cholerick man does not always go ſo far as to lift up his arm to ſtrike, but he uſes his tongue to dart maledictions and injuries like ſo many arrows againſt the perſon who has offended him: ſometimes, thô the mind fired with fury retains the tongue and hinders it from breaking out, yet he departs entirely from the love of his neighbour, and renounces charity. For he nourishes bitter

thoughts

thoughts which like as many envenomed needles thruſt into the wound, hinder it from healing: then there ſtarts up fresh ſubjects of diſcontent which ſtill more encreaſes the bad diſpoſition: and thus, that which was at firſt but a mote, ſwells to the bigneſs of a beam, and the anger by all theſe unhappy degrees becomes at laſt a formall hatred.

We are too proud to conſerve meekneſs and peace; we cannot bear to be ſlighted by our neigbour; an injury is an inſupportable torment to us; and if we happen to have any difference with our companions we blush to make the firſt ſatisfaction. Our carnal heart loves preſent glory; it shuns humiliation as much as poſſible, as an evil it cannot bear; and this pride goes ſo far, that often the perſon who is to blame in the quarrel, would be glad to be reconciled with the party offended, but can-

cannot reſolve to take the firſt ſteps. To get out of ſo hurtfull a diſpoſition, let us think of what Jeſus Chriſt our head and our King has done; let the conſideration of his charity diſcover to us the greatneſs of our malice, and his example confound and edifie us. Our ſins have raiſed a terrible war between him and us, all the wrong is on our ſide, all the Juſtice on his; nevertheleſs it is he who ſues firſt for peace; it is he who firſt ſends his Embaſſadours to make us the moſt advantagious propoſitions; it is he who by the mouth of his Apoſtles and Preachers, entreats us to be reconciled to him. Let us then blush at our pride, after ſuch an example, and think we deſerve the utmoſt confuſion if we ſtill think much to ſatisfie our neighbour when we know we have offended him.

§ 4. *She that will not forgive her sister must not hope to obtain what she asks of God in her prayers. If there be any one who will never ask pardon, or at least does not ask it from her heart, thô she should not be put out of the Monastery, yet her Monastical life would avail her nothing.*

Jesus Christ who is our peace, takes so much care to reunite and reconcile us to our neighbour, that he permits us to leave before his Altar the present we were ready to offer: and is willing to have the sacred ministry of his worship interrupted, and the ceremony left imperfect, till he who would honour him by his offerings has been to disperse the subjects of misunderstanding, and break the enmity

mity which was in the heart of his brother. In the mean time we are neither touch'd with gratitude nor reſpect for ſo great a goodneſs. We long maintain our animoſities; we ſpin out our quarrels to a great length; we do not pacifie our neigbours when we have offended them; nor do we reflect, that if Almighty God punishes cholerick perſons, and thoſe who cherish the remembrance of injuries, he will not leave unpunish'd thoſe who offend them, and who having been cauſe of their fall will not go a ſtep to help them up again, that is, to pacifie them by a juſt ſatisfaction. It is not to be wonder'd at, if thoſe who have ſuffer'd injuries, or imagin they have, have difficulty to make the firſt advances; the pain they feel preſſes their heart, and takes from them part of the liberty of body and mind: but thoſe who have done the injury having not that

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to ſuffer, and being in no pain which captivates their liberty, have no pretence to excuſe them. Therefore Almighty God addreſſes to him who has done the injury, as to the perſon who being exempt from trouble and anger, is by conſequence at liberty and poſſeſſes himſelf. And his divine Majeſty orders him to go to the injured perſon, who is not entirely free, becauſe of the grief that preſſes him, and anger that has ſeized him: shewing by this ſo wiſe and juſt a proceeding, that he who is the cauſe of the ſin is the moſt guilty of the two; and that he is to bear the pain of it, if that can be conſider'd as a pain, which is recompenſed by ſo great a good as charity and peace.

But inſenſible as we are! all theſe conſiderations are not ſufficient to correct us: we ſtill continue to give cauſes of grief and anger to our neighbour, and that for matters of

no importance to us: and as if we did no harm in it, we neglect to make them ſatisfaction; we forget our fault as ſoon as we have committed it; leave our neighbour in bitterneſs; and if we do ſometimes think of making amends, we are ſo long about it, without conſidering that the longer the diſcord laſts, which we thus neglect to remove, the more ſeverely we ſhall be punish'd for it. As long as friendship laſts between two or many perſons, they do not eaſily open their hearts to miſtruſt, nor ſoon believe things that might produce coldneſs, and break a right underſtanding: but when once enmity has ſeiz'd the minds and hearts, all things are taken ill: they miſconſtre all they ſee and hear, give an ill turn to the moſt innocent words and actions, and that in ſo ſmart a manner, that it only ſerves to widen the breach and make it harder to be repair'd, be-

becauſe they only take what is ill in its improper ſenſe. Now it is the will and orders of our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, that he who comes to his Altars, should leave there his preſent, and before he offers it, go to be reconciled with his brother whom he has left in bitterneſs; to teach us that, if at the very time that the worship of God, and the miniſtry of his ſacrifice requires his preſence, he will not have us conceal from our ſelves the obligation of our reconciliation, nor deferr the the performance of it; we are much more obliged to this duty at other times.

But if it happens that we our ſelves are angry, another command obliges us to put an end to the motion of that paſſion, and to renounce all thoughts of enmity the ſame day, ſince it was to every body S. Paul ſaid, ſpeaking to the Epheſians: *let not the ſun go down upon your anger.*

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Epheſ. 4. 26. Nevertheleſs, not content to violate this precept by keeping our reſentments many days, we alſo ſet ſnares for one another, we make uſe of words and deeds to ſupplant our neighbour, we, as one may ſay, tear and eat one another by a reciprocal fury: what more can mad men, and people poſſeſt by the devil do, than thus with their teeth to rent and tear in pieces their own members? They that are thus diſpoſed in regard of their neighbour will get no advantage by a Monaſtical life, and it is in vain for their ſalvation, that they are mingled in ſociety with many others, ſince in that ſtate they can neither appeaſe the wrath of God by Sacrifices, nor advance in perfectiou by good works.

§ 5. *Beware therefore of hard words.*

A mild anſwer breaks anger, and a

hard word excites fury. Prov. 15. 1. *A gentle word multiplys friends, and appeases enemies.* Eccle. 6. 5. These are maxims of wisdome; and S. Paul had no others when he wrote to the Galatians; *You that are spirituel, instruct the persons in a spirit of mildness.* Gal. 6. 1. This is what ought to be a rule to persons who would acquire the perfection of sanctity, to move them to avoid all hard and offensive words in their discourses.

§ 6. *However if they should chance to escape your mouth, let the tongue that has caused the wound, procure the cure.*

We ought very carefully to avoid giving trouble or displeasure to any, by offensive words: but if we happen to sin that way, by surprise or by frailty, we must presently make satisfaction to those we have offended; and by gentle and obliging

words

words, make amends for the harsh ones we have utter'd, to the end that the diſturbance and wound we have cauſed, may be cured by the remedy of an humble acknowledgment. But as we have already ſaid, it is better to avoid the fault than to correct it when committed. Therefore the ſervants of God ought to ſet a vigilant guard upon their mouths, that they may not fall into the ſins of the tongue: and if they are obliged to this at all times, they muſt be ſtill more exact in it when ſinners riſe up againſt them; that is when they are attack'd by injuries, or defamed by calumnies. For there will be always people either proud or envious, who will exerciſe and torment God's ſervants by their perſecutions, and it is then they ought to practice the counſel of the wiſe man: *If thou have underſtanding, anſwer thy neighbour, but if not, let thy hand be upon thy mouth, leſt thou be*

taken in an unskilfull word, and be confounded. Eccle. 5. 14.

§ 7. *But if you ſuperiours, who are obliged to keep up religious diſciplin, should in your corrections uſe hard words; thô you should perceive that you had exceeded due bounds therein, it is not required that you ask pardon of your ſubjects; leſt by having too great a regard to humility, you should weaken your authority in governing them who ought to be ſubjected to you.*

This is what often happens to the greateſt Doctors, and to thoſe who have care of ſouls, for in the corrections they are obliged to make by the duty of their charge, the zeal, which excites them, carrys them beyond that moderation they ought to obſerve, and they let ſlip ſome word too harsh; becauſe the fire of charity does not yet fill the whole

capacity of their heart. Upon which we muſt here make the application of the commandment which Almighty God order'd Moyſes to publish. *If ſome one goes without any evil deſign into the wood to cut wood with one of his friends: and in cutting of wood the Ax ſlip'd out of his hand; and the iron falling from the handle ſtruck his friend and kill'd him: he ſhall flye into one of the cities aforeſaid, and live.* Deut. 19. 4. *Leſt perhaps the next kindsman of him whoſe blood was shed, prick'd with ſorrow, purſue, and apprehend him, if the way be too long, and ſtrike his life that is not guilty of death.* We go with our fried to the wood ſays S. Gregory, when converting our ſelves to God, we with our brethren attend to the conſideration of our ſins: we cut wood without having any ill deſign, when with holy intentions we labour to cut off the faults of the faulty. But the Axe ſlips out of our hands when

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too much heat carrys us on to an exceſſive ſeverity; the iron falls from its handle when words too hard iſſue from our mouths, and it ſtrikes our friend dead, becauſe the outraging word makes charity die in him to whom it is addreſs'd; and ones neigbour conceives ſentiments of hatred when he finds himſelf overcharged by a rigorous reprehenſion which exceeds either his fault or his patience. But he who has thus kill'd his brother by an inconſiderate blow, muſt flye to one of the three towns of refuge to ſave himſelf from death, that is to ſay; if having recourſe to the ſighs and tears of penance, he hides himſelf in the unity of this Sacrament under the divine vertues faith, hope and charity, he will not be reputed guilty of the crime of murder; and the next kindsman of the deceaſed shall not kill him, becauſe the ſovereign Judge who is become

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our brother by uniting himſelf to our nature, will not ſeek the punishment of that guilty perſon whom his mercy shall have conceal'd under the refuge of faith, hope, and charity.

§ 8. *Notwithſtanding you muſt ask pardon of Almighty God, who knows how well you love thoſe very perſons whom you have corrected more ſeverely perchance than was reaſonable.*

When we paſs the bounds of moderation, it is ſometimes thrô a bitter zeal of malice and envy; but ſometimes alſo it happens thrô a true zeal of Juſtice. In ſome it is the effect of a determin'd will which with deliberation and reflexion utters harsh words; in others they are only inconſiderate words which ſlip out without any ill will. Now our Lord does not ſo much mind the words

words, as the intention, and the fault, of those words is much sooner pardon'd when it was not a formal malice that produced them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of avoiding fond affections and immodest carriage.

There must not be sensual love among you, all must be spiritual. As to what passes even betwixt women, who forget their modesty, either by jeasling or playing indecently; it is so far from being allow'd of, in the chaste handmaids of Christ, or widows settled in the Monastry, that it is not permitted even to married or single persons in the world.

THere are people enough to be seen who love their neighbour when tyed to them with the bonds of flesh and blood: holy writ does not condemn this affection, but moves

moves us to another much more perfect: for there is great difference between the love which is formed in the boſome of nature, and the charity which proceeds from the obedience we owe to the commandments of God. Thoſe who only love their neighbour for natural reaſons, will not for that obtain the celeſtial rewards promiſed to thoſe who love thrô a principle of charity: becauſe their carnal love is not capable of a merit proportionable to ſuch great bleſſings. It is charity only, which makes us diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, who has ſaid: *by this all men ſhall know that you are my diſciples, if you have love one for one another.* Jo. 13. 35. And this vertue has two characters which diſtinguishes it from carnal love: the firſt is to love our friends in God: and the ſecond is to love our enemies for God. Nevertheleſs we muſt own that the ſpirit often cheats it ſelf in regard of enemies, by an appearance

of charity, and falsely believes it has charity when in reality it has not. For this it stands in need of some rules to undeceive it. But we may conclude without mistake that we truly love our enemies when we feel no uneasyness for their prosperity, nor any joy for their adversity.

Charity at first gives us but two precepts: but from these two precepts which are general, she afterwards enlarges into a world of others more particular. These first precepts are to love God and our neighbour: but the love of God is presently divided into three essential obligations, which are to love him with all our *heart*, with all our *soul*, and with all our *strength*. Upon which we must remark that the law, in the first of it's commandments, does not only simply expose to us the necessity of this love, but also signify's what ought to be the measure

ſure of it, by ordering us to ſpend all our faculties in it: and certainly there is nothing more juſt than to give this extent to charity; becauſe every one who would perfectly pleaſe Almighty God, ought to leave nothing of themſelves which is not conſecrated to him without reſerve.

The love of our neighbour contains alſo two precepts. The firſt is expres'd by the ſacred text in theſe words: *that which thou hateſt to be done to thee by another, ſee thou do it not to another at any time.* Tob. 4. 16. And the ſecond by theſe: *all things therefore whatſoever you will that men do to you, do you alſo to them.* Mat. 7. 12. By the firſt of theſe precepts we put a ſtop to malice, and by the ſecond we practice meekneſs. By the firſt I ſay, each abſtaining from doing the harm to others which he would not willingly ſuffer himſelf, he ſtops the courſe

courſe of evil actions: and by the ſecond, rendering to his neighbour the ſervices he would wish to receive himſelf, he learns to practice vertue. But whilſt our mind is applyed to the conſideration of theſe two duties, our heart is prepared to put in practice many excellent vertues, either by hindering our ſoul from making others ſuffer the uneaſyneſs it ought not to give them, or by exciting it to be fervorous in the ſuccours she is obliged to give them.

For when a man would avoid doing the evil to others which he would not willingly ſuffer himſelf, he preſently uſes great vigilance, with an exact circumſpection over himſelf, leſt pride should ſwell his heart and make him contemn his neighbour: ambition rent it and move him to deſire either the glory or goods of another: Luxury corrupt it, and ſubjecting it to impurity make his life ſcandalous:

Anger

Anger vex it, and overheat his ill humour to make him utter injurious words: envy devour and wither it up at the ſight of his brothers proſperity: or that his tongue should exceed due bounds and make him ſin: and above all, leſt hatred should excite fury in him, and move him to miſuſe him for whom he ought to have true charity.

But on the other ſide whilſt this charitable man ſeeks occaſions to do his neigbour all the good offices he would have render'd to himſelf, what vertues does he not practice! he requites injuries with good turns, and recompenſes the benefits he has received, with others much greater: he always keeps an equal mild temper towards thoſe who are moſt teſty and ſubject to anger, and he treats with kindneſs even thoſe whoſe faults are accompany'd with malice: he procures reconciliation

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and peace for thoſe who are at variance, and profits by the union he ſees among others to move them to the deſire of true peace: he gives neceſſary things to thoſe who are in want: he brings back to the right way thoſe who wander from juſtice: he comforts the afflicted by demonſtrations of a tender compaſſion: he checks by powerful reprehenſions thoſe he ſees ready to follow their evil deſires: he puts a ſtop to the threats of the powerfull, by prudent reaſons, and ſolaces as much as he can thoſe who are oppreſs'd: he oppoſes his patience to the fury of thoſe who reſiſt him abroad: he by diſcreet proceedings reduces thoſe who are troubleſome at home by their pride: he in ſuch ſort moderates his zeal by ſweetneſs in regard of his inferiours, that he notwithſtanding never forgets the duty of juſtice: he knows how to arm himſelf ſo with zeal to revenge

venge crimes, that he never loſes ſight of the limits that charity preſcribes: he in ſuch a manner bears in ſilence with the faults he cannot correct, that he takes care his ſilence may not be taken for conſent: he ſo laments the evils he is obliged to ſuffer in ſilence, that the grief he feels for the ſame does not degenerate into averſion againſt the ſinner. In short, he gains the heart of the ungrateful by all ſorts of good turns without deviating in the leaſt from truth and juſtice: he renders to his neighbour all the aſſiſtances which are in his power without injuring himſelf by vain thoughts: he avoids ſuch thoughts in his good works without diminishing the fervour they ought to be done with: he gives terrene goods without diſquieting his mind by the apprehenſion of becoming too poor: he gives all he has to his brethren without loſing due gratitude to Almighty God for the goods he en-

enriches him with: and thus grief never obscures the beauty and splendor of the presents he makes to Jesus Christ.

It is then with reason said of the law of God, that it contains many laws, since we see by this that has been said, that without admiting any change in its self, it perfectly agrees with all these different duties of charity, and remaining still the same, it seems to take an infinity of different formes, diversifying it self according to the states and conditions we are in. This is what the great Apostle meant writing to the corinthians: *Charity is patient, is kind; Charity envyeth not dealeth not perversly, is not puff'd up, it is not ambitious, it seeketh not its own interest, it is not provoked to anger, it thinks no evil, it rejoyceth not upon iniquity, but rejoyceth with Truth &c.*

CHAPTER XIX.

Of the Obedience.

Unto your ſuperiour as unto a Mother, you muſt be truly obedient, ſhewing her all reſpect and honour; leaſt by offending her you offend God: but much more unto the Bishop who hath the care of you all.

OBedience is a vertue which alone is ſufficient to produce all the others in our ſoul, and after having produced them there, is alſo the faithful Guardian of them: *Obedience is better than ſacrifice*, 1. King. 5. 22. Becauſe in ſacrifice the flesh of animals is immolated, whereas by obedience our own will is mortified, and in a manner destroy'd for the honour of God. *The obedient man ſhall ſpeak victories*,

ſaid Soloman; becauſe by humbly ſubmiting our ſelves to the word of another, we gain a victory over our ſelves, and our heart is the field of battle. Obedience is a vertue which we ought to practice couragiouſly even till death. Obedience muſt never move us to do ill; but ſometimes we muſt for obedience ſake, interrupt the good we are about. Now becauſe it may happen that what is ordain'd us, has nothing diſpleaſing to us, but on the contrary is very conformable to our inclination, that we may not loſe the merit of ſo great a vertue it is important to know that according to S. Gregory „ when obe-
„ dience has ſomething of us in it, it is
„ ſometimes reckon'd for nothing;
„ and that in other occaſions if there
„ is not ſomething of us in it, it
„ is of very ſmall merit. S. Greg.
„ moral. L. 35. 10.

This propoſition which is a little ob-

obſcure, may be clear'd by examples. When we are commanded a thing which is advantagious according to our natural taſte, as when we are elevated to a poſt in which is glory and command; if we are already moved by our own inclination to ſeek that place with eagerneſs and heat, it is then we obey without any merit. On the contrary, when ſome contemptible employment is impoſed upon us, which is diſguſtful to flesh and blood, as when we are expoſed to reproaches and pain if the heart does not embrace and love that ſtate, it much diminishes the merit of the obedience, and ruins it quite if it is only by conſtraint it deſcends into the humilitation. Obedience then ought to have ſomething of us as to what is diſguſtful to ſenſuality: and on the contrary it ought to have nothing at all of us, as to what is agreable to ſenſe: to the end that

the obedient perſons acquire as much more glory in adverſity, as they freely ſubmit to it for the love they bear to the divine orders; and in proſperity remain ſo much the more humble, and by conſequence shelter'd from all ſorts of dangers, ſince they have only yielded by a perfect ſubmiſſion to the will of God, who has raiſed them to honorable places which they did not ſeek the glory of. Obedience is an ornament which always accompanys and ſets off the beauty of innocent ſouls: obedience is the character that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has given to his sheep when he ſays: *my sheep hear my voice: and I know them, and they follow me.* Jo. 10. 27. The obedience that this divine redeemer requires, always contains innocence of manners, and a perſon will never paſs for innocent in the ſight of God, who refuſes to obey thoſe he has given him for ſuperiours.

Chap-

CHAPTER XX.

Of correcting faults.

Wherefore to the end all theſe things may be duly obſerved, if any point thereof is not well kept, it ſhall not be negligently paſs'd over; but the ſuperiour, whoſe buſineſs chiefly it is, ſhall take care to ſee it mended, and corrected. But if there ſhould happen any thing which ſhould exceed her power and judgment; it ſhall be referr'd to the Prieſt, or Biſhop who has a ſuperiour charge over you.

THeſe obſervances of regularity have been ordain'd to the end they be all put in practice. If then there is any one not obſerved, the fault muſt be remedy'd as ſoon as poſſible: becauſe, ſince we have vow'd to keep them exactly, and ſworne

ſworne to conform our lives to them, we cannot neglect any but at the peril of our ſoul. *Thou haſt very much commanded thy commandments to be kept ſaid David.* Pſal. 118. And the Apoſtle S. James; *whoſoever ſhall keep all the whole law, but offendeth in one point, he is become guilty of all.* Jam. 2. 10. Therefore it is the duty of the ſuperiour who ought to maintain order, to referr to the *Prieſt* or Bishop who have greater authority, all the riſing difficulties, the determination of which exceeds her power and judgment, according to the rules eſtablish'd in the order; for if in a religious community it is not an Abbot, but the Bishop, who govern's; then it is the Bishop himſelf who is deſigned by the word Prieſt: for Prelates are eſtablish'd in the church to conſerve whole and entire the things which have been well ordain'd, to correct what is amiſs, and

and by their words and examples to forme the lives and manners of their ſubjects, following the inſtruction S. Paul gives them : *urge in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon : reprove, beſeech, rebuke* 2. Tim. 4. 4.

In reality Paſtors are obliged as times and occaſions require, to uſe ſometimes ſevere reprehenſions, and ſometimes kind carreſſes : they muſt correct in a more sharp manner thoſe who are turbulent and hardly reduced to their duty ; uſe entreaties to thoſe who are obedient, meek, and patient, to encline them to become ſtill better, and to make greater progreſs in vertue ; employ threaths, and even punishments in regard of thoſe who behave with negligence, or in whom is remark'd diſdainfulneſs or pride.

Paſtors and ſuperiours ought not to diſſemble the faults of the faulty, but uſe all their might to root up the evil as ſoon as it begins to appear;

pear; having always in view the punishment that the high Prieſt Heli pull'd down upon his own head, on the account of his children. Nevertheleſs a ſimple advertiſment is ſufficient for the firſt and ſecond time, in regard of thoſe who are of a good make and have more civility than others: but thoſe who are malicious, proud or rebellious, muſt be kept under by the ſcourge of chaſtisments, according to the counſell of the wiſe man: *A fool receiveth not the words of prudence: thou shalt ſtrike the child with the rod, and deliver his ſoul from hell.* Prov. 18. 2. 23. 14.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of the ſuperiour's Office.

§ 1. *She who is our ſuperiour, muſt not think her ſelf happy for her authority in governing; but rather for her charity in ſerving others.*

THoſe who being placed over others rejoyce at their power, and delight in the practice of their authority, are not true Paſtors but hirelings: they are ſelfish people who like better to command than to profit, to be great than to be uſefull, who ſeek not the ſalvation of ſouls, but temporal gain, who have not heavenly glory, but earthly honour for the object of their deſires. Woe be to them, becauſe our ſaviour has already condemn'd them by his words: *Amen I ſay to you, they have recei-*

received their reward. Mat. 6. 16. But the true Paſtors are thoſe who in eminent poſts place their whole joy in rendering all the ſervices and ſuccours to others, they are capable of, who are not delighted in the charge; who do not affect the power, but love the charity; who ſeek not to be ſerved but to ſerve others. Thoſe I ſay, are perfect imitators of that good and true Paſtor *who came not to be ſerved, but to ſerve, and give his life a ranſome for many.* Mat. 20. 28. They may alſo ſay with the Apoſtle: *When I was free as to all, I made my ſelf a ſervant to all, that I might gain more perſons.* 1. Cor. 9. 19. But thô on their ſide the charity they have in heart, thus debaſes them, yet the authority of their charge makes them be reſpected by their ſubjects. Therefore the rule adds.

§ 2. *She ſhall be reſpected & honour'd in the exteriour as your ſuperiour.*

The reaſon why we ought to bear ſo great reſpect to our ſuperiour, is becauſe in the Monaſtery she holds the place of Jeſus Chriſt, as that Sovereigne Lord makes it known himſelf by ſaying to Paſtors: *he that heareth you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* Luk. 10. 16. The ſervants of God then ought to bear great reſpect and honour to him who holds the place of their Maſter, ſince it is for the love of God they are ſubject to his government. But as for the ſuperiour, the more she is exalted exteriourly by teſtimonies of reſpect, the more she ought to fear at the bottom of her conſcience, and conceive a contempt of her ſelf, by conſidering as her betters thoſe who pay her ſo much honour.

§ 3.

§ 3. *But in the ſight of God, she shall lye proſtrate at your feet.*

The greater thou art, ſaith the wiſe man, *humble thy ſelf in all things.* Eccl. 3. 20. And again, *have they made thee ruler, be not extoll'd, amongſt them, as one of them.* Ibid. 32. 1. And our Lord ſays alſo in the Goſpel: *Every one that exalteth himſelf, shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himſelf, shall be exalted.* Luk. 18. 14. becauſe we are great before God, proportionably as we are little in our own eyes. But let us hear now what the ſuperiour ought to be in her perſon and manners.

§ 4. *She shall make her ſelf a pattern of all good works to you all.*

As she is above all, in honour, in dignity, and in rank, ſo she ought

ought to ſurpaſs all in Sanctity; that thoſe who are ſubject to her may learn by her comportement as in an excellent book, in what manner they ought to ſquare their lives.

§ 5. *Unquiet and buſy perſons she muſt correct, the dejected she muſt comfort, she muſt bear with the weak, and be patient with all.*

Thoſe who are placed above others to govern them, ought to know the art of bearing evil, and never doing it to any body; that by their meekneſs they may pacifie the cholerick; becauſe the ſouls Phiſician ought to ſtrive to cure ſpiritual diſeaſes which are ſins, by the remedies he extracts from his own vertues. Therefore ſuperiours are obliged carefully to conſider at firſt what are the manners

ners and dispositions of each, that they may know what remedies they ought chiefly to use, and how to deal with them.

§ 6. *Let her willingly accept a correction, and warily give it: and although both love and fear be necessary, yet she must seek rather to be beloved than fear'd, ever remembring that she must account to God for you all.*

He that has the quality of Doctor in the church, must be wise and regular in his manners: for it is then only that he is worthy to impose upon others the necessity of living according to the rule, when he lives himself conformably to what he ordains, and takes from his own stock the conduct he observes towards others to raise them to perfection. S. Paul said

to the Hebrews, *perſevere under diſciplin. God offereth himſelf to you, as to ſons; for what ſon is there whom his father doth not correct?* Hebr. 12. 7. Theſe words ſignifie two duties belonging to him who holds the place of father by the government he is charged with, and two obligations he has in regard of thoſe who are under his tuition in quality of ſpiritual children; for he ought at once to inſpire them with a reſpectful fear, and to have for them a compaſſionate love: make himſelf be feared by thoſe who are proud, rebellious, and ſtubborn; but exert a tender love to thoſe who ſerve God with a good heart, and live in piety, and humility.

§ 7. *Aud although both love and fear be neceſſary, yet she muſt ſeek rather to be beloved than feared.*

The reaſon of this advice is becauſe

cauſe a ſuperiour is much more willingly heard when she is beloved; and Almighty God is better pleaſed with the obedience that is paid him for love, than with that which is forced by fear. Therefore our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, that Maſter of an incomparable meekneſs, ſaid to his Diſciples: *I will not call you ſervants but friends*, Jo. 15. 14. Becauſe he would not have us act by conſtraint, but love him as children love their father: and fulfill his precepts, not for fear of chaſtiſments, but for the love of Juſtice. On the other ſide, he who is appointed to Judge ſouls in this world, ought to remember that he has God above him who will Judge him in the next; and tend the more carefully to the conduct of thoſe confided to him, ſince the account he muſt give of them to that ſevere and clear ſighted Judge, will be ſtrict and terrible. This reflexion is ſo ne-

neceſſary, that even our good works ought to be done with a continual eye upon our laſt end, according to that important advice of the wiſe man: *In all thy works remember thy later end, and thou wilt not ſin for ever.* Eccl. 7. 40.

§ 8. *Therefore you ſhould be more tractable, having compaſſion not only of your ſelves, but alſo of her, who is the more in danger, the higher ſhe is placed in authority over you.*

Thoſe who are raiſed to an eminency which gives them the goverment of ſouls, are expoſed to great danger, and the higher their rank is, the more dangerous their fall will be, if they chance to ſtumble: becauſe, *more ſhall be demanded of him, to whom much was recommended.* Luk. 12. 48. It is to be in great danger, to live at once

both for ones ſelf and for others; to be obliged to extend ones forecaſt and cares both upon temporal and ſpiritual things, he that is in ſo perilous a ſtate, ought to take care of his own conſcience in ſuch a manner, as not to omit due vigilance over thoſe of others, and ſo tend to the conduct of others, as not to forget his own ſanctification: he muſt take care that the temporals be conſerved, and diſtributed in due manner. Without failing as to the entire application neceſſary to advance the ſpirituals: and finally he muſt burn with ſuch an ardour to encreaſe the ſpiritual riches in ſouls, as not to neglect the economy of the temporal goods which are for the nourishment of the body. This ought to move the inferiours to pay a perfect obedience to their ſuperiour, when they ſee the labours he is oppreſs'd with for love of them; and when they perform

this

this duty, they have not only compaſſion of themſelves, but alſo of him. They have compaſſion of themſelves, becauſe they practice what is written, *have mercy on thine own ſoul, pleaſing God.* Eccle. 30. 24. And they have alſo compaſſion of their ſuperior, becauſe by obeying all his orders they lighten the burden he is charged with, according to theſe words of the ſcripture: a wiſe ſon maketh the father glad; for ſpiritual fathers bear more eaſily the labours of their charge when they ſee their ſpiritual children obediently ſubmit to their conduct.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of observing the Rule, and reading thereof.

§ *I. Our Lord grant that you, as affecting spiritual beauty, may observe all these things by a motive of love, and become odoriferous with the sweet odour of christ, by a holy conversation; not as slaves under the servitude of the law, but as free children under the liberty of grace.*

THere could be nothing more proper after the lecture of all these rules, than the addition of this prayer: for a man who reads or preaches the word of God, is like another who sows a field, and he who prays like one who covers with earth the good grain that has been sow'd. When a labourer has sow'd his field, if he

he lets the ſeed lye long uncover'd, the birds come flocking down, and carry away what he thought he had ſafe in the earth. So thoſe who have ſow'd in the field of their heart the excellent ſeed of the word of God, either by reading good books, by ſermons, or by ſinging Pſalms, if they do not cover it preſently, and as it were bury it in themſelves, by prayer, the birds come in flocks, that is to ſay, the ideas of the world, the fleeting and vain thoughts of the age, which cover the ſurface of the heart, and carry away all that had been ſown in it. Therefore as often as we leave reading, or go from a ſermon, we muſt have recourſe to prayer, that the vertue and efficacy of the word of God may abide in our heart, and ſpiritual fruits may be ſeen to grow in our actions.

§ 2.

§ 2. *As affecting Spiritual beauty &c.*

It is with reaſon that the rule is thus expreſs'd; for we can never fulfill all the precepts of a Spiritual life, if we do not feel our ſelves moved and drawn by the ſacred charmes of the ſpiritual beauty of Juſtice; for no man ever does good againſt his will, thô the action should be good of it ſelf.

§ 3. *And become odoriferous with the ſweet odour of Chriſt, by a holy converſation. &c.*

This which is here added, regards a holy life, and a good reputation, to teach us that theſe two things ought always to be together, that we may be able to ſay with the Apoſtle: *We are a ſweet odour of Chriſt to God in every place.* 2. Cor. 2. 15. Thoſe who

who only ſerve God by a ſpirit of fear, are ſlaves under the law, but thoſe who perform his commands by a motive of love, are free children under the liberty of grace. Now this grace is a gift of God, which is pour'd into our hearts by the holy Ghoſt who has been given us, and it is by this grace we fulfill the law. Not that the law has been impoſed upon the juſt, ſince where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there alſo is charity. But when that charity has given full extent to our heart, we run without impediment, entirely at liberty, in the royal way of God's commandments.

§ 4. *But to the end that you may ſee your ſelves in this little book, as in a looking-glaſs, and that nothing may be neglected out of forgetfulneſs; let it evermore once a week be read unto you.*

We are commanded to read the rule

rule often, to the end that by the frequent lecture, having it well engraven in our memory, it may come often into our mind, and appear in our actions, becauſe according to S. James: *He that hath look'd into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued in it, becoming not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work; this man ſhall be happy in his deed.* Jam. 1. 15. This little book is with reaſon calld a looking glaſs, becauſe we may uſe it as a moſt faithful mirrour to conſider the countenance of our ſoul, and ſee if we are hanſome or ugly, juſt or unjuſt, if we live regularly, if we advance or go backward in the way of perfection; finally if we are pleaſing to Almighty God, or ſo unhappy as to diſpleaſe him.

Holy writ repreſents to us the image of our interiour man; it plainly ſhews us what there is of beautiful or diſform'd in our ſoul: we by con-

conſidering our ſelves therein, learn to conſerve and maintain the beauty of juſtice; we thereby find out in what order the vertues are to be ſet, to have their full luſter, and how we may blot out the blemiſhes of ſin, to repair in us the reſemblance of God. The wicked do not like to conſider themſelves in this pure mirrour, they uſualy cover up their faults, and hide their ſins from themſelves as well as from others; they never reflect upon their ways to examin them, and overlook the moſt evil actions by a dreadful blindneſs, without concerning themſelves for the judgment Almighty God bears againſt them. But the ſaints on the contrary, continually conſider there lives in relation to the holy ſcripture; they daily examin their conduct by the word of God; they confront all their particular actions with the model of perfection they ſee therein, and if

it happen that they perceive in them any thing diform'd, miſplaced, or contrary to order, they preſently ſtrive to redreſs it by the idea of perfection they ſtudy, that they may be interiourly and exteriourly ſound and ſpotleſs in the ſight of God. This prudent way of proceeding was uſed by the Royal Prophet who ſaid to Almighty God in his ſacred canticles: *then ſhall I not be confounded, when I ſhall look thoroughly in all thy commandments.* Pſal. 118. It was alſo the great Apoſtle's method, who wrote to the faithfull of Epheſus: *Be renew'd in the ſpirit of your mind.* Epheſ. 4. 23. And to the corinthians: *The inward man is renew'd from day to day,*

§ 5. *And when you find that you have obſerved all that is written therein, give thanks to Almighty God the giver of all good.*

We ought to render continual thanks

thanks to the father of lights, becauſe from him deſcends all excellent grace, and all perfect gifts: for no man will ever become happy by the very gifts he receives from God, however great they are, if he is ungrateful to his divine benefactor. Therefore the Apoſtle ſaid: *What haſt thou, that thou haſt not received?* 1. Cor. 4. 7. For the ſenſe of theſe words is this: never ceaſe to render thanks to our Lord and our God, from whoſe goodneſs and liberality you have all things. We ought alſo ro profit by this wholſome advice, acknowledging that every one who lives well is indebted to the grace of Almighty God for that advantage; and that it is alſo by the ſame ſuccour they can grow and profit in the love of juſtice. Such thoughts breed piety, and even wiſdome, which is ſo much recommended to us, is nothing elſe but that piety by which we pay to the father of lights

lights, the worship which is due to him, and which is only render'd him by the sacrifice of praises and thanksgiving, but so, that he who adores the Divine Majesty, never Glory's in himself, but in our Lord only.

§ 6. *But when any of you perceiceives that she has fail'd in any point, she must be sorry for what is past, take better care for the future, beseeching our Lord that her fault may be pardon'd, and that she may never be led into temptation*
Amen.

FINIS.

AN ABRIDGMENT

Of the Expoſition of the Rule of

S. AUGUSTIN.

We ought above all things to Love. &c.

OUr holy father S. Auguſtin by leaving us charity for guide in all things, which goes directly to Almighty God, without ſeeking proper ſatiſfaction or intereſt, by expreſsly ordaining us to give this vertue the preheminence; he declares to us that we are only faithful to his rule, as far as denying our ſelves in all things

things, we ſeek nothing but the greater glory of God, and the means to make our ſelves more pleaſing in his ſight.

And then our Neighbour &c.

We ought to be extreamly afraid of the very leaſt faults againſt fraternal charity, ſince Almighty God holds them as done againſt himſelf; and often when we think we only ſeparate our ſelves from one of our brethren, we fall into a dreadfull abandonment of God himſelf. But as much as this diviſion is hurtful to us, ſo much is the love of our neighbour moſt profitable to us; for it enriches us with all ſorts of graces, it unites us to God; that is, he abides in us, and we in him, by it we fulfill all the law, and maintain the life of the ſoul, which is the holy Ghoſt.

We command all who are ſettled. &c.

Our holy father by this demonſtrates

strates the reason why these excellent precepts are read to us, which is, that by this lecture we may have an entire knowledge of them; and that our minds being taken up with the same, we may practice them with an inviolable fidelity.

First you must know that, &c.

We are obliged to employ our selves here in the service of God with as great a coresponsancy of charity, as if we had but one *heart*, and one *soul*. We must be united in all by one only intention towards good, and one and the same love for God. It is not sufficient to be separated from the world, we must also labour to unite our selves to Almighty God with all our heart, and all our soul. The only means to have but one heart, and one soul in God, is to have charity; it is to love God with all our hearts and souls; because God is charity.

You shall not therefore call any &c.

Charity having the property not to ſeek her own intereſt, we muſt not ſo much as call any thing our own; but let our words expreſs that we have nothing in particular. God himſelf is the portion of the ſaints, and they that would have Almighty God for their poſſeſſion, ought not to ſeek nor love any thing out of him. *He is too coveteous whom God ſuffices not.*

And every one shall receive &c.

But as however great our diſingagement is, we cannot live upon earth without many neceſſaries for the body, ſo we muſt remember that we muſt receive thoſe neceſſaries *by the appointement of the ſuperiour*; and that we are indiſpenſably obliged to employ our lives in the ſervice

ſervice of the Almighty whoſe bounty and providence gives us wherewith to maintain thoſe lives, if we would with ſecurity of conſcience share of the goods which are diſtributed amongſt us.

But that is not to be diſtributed, &c.

When the rule appoints that *to each be given according to her need.* That muſt be underſtood in ſuch a manner, that the flesh may have ſufficient nourishment not to fail us in the diſcharge of our duties, but that the appetites be reſiſted ſtoutly enough to hinder them from riſing up againſt the ſpirit.

Such perſons therefore as in the world, &c.

Our holy father is uot content that thoſe who embrace his rule, only barely deveſt themſelves of their goods; but he will have them do

it with joy, *and even be well content to have their ſubſtance put in common.* Becauſe our Lord loves a chearful giver. And we muſt forſake the power to poſſeſs, and the will to have.

And thoſe who were poor before &c.

Even thoſe who had nothing in the world, may in religion leave ſomething, to wit, the will to have.

Notwithſtanding they alſo ſhall have, &c.

It is juſt that all who engage in the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould live of the revenues of Jeſus Chriſt, whether they have been poor or rich; for the workman is worthy of his hire.

Yet for all that, they muſt not, &c.

We muſt moſt carefully endea-

vour to find out on which ſide the bent of our heart gives, and continually watch to hinder it from fixing upon tranſitory things; for thô we are forced, to uſe ſome of them, yet all our deſires, and all the capacity of our heart ought to be wholy taken up, and fill'd with thoſe of heaven.

Neither may they carry themſelves high &c.

If heaven it ſelf avail'd not the proud Angels, doubtleſs the Monaſtry will not be profitable to thoſe who ſhall imitate them in their ſin.

But again ſuch perſons as were of a &c.

Almighty God makes no exceptof perſons, and there is but one and the ſame Lord, who is rich to all that invoke him; therefore, let us not place our glory in the

ſecular greatneſs of our parents; but in the company of our poor ſiſtes.

Neither shall they be proud, &c.

To exalt one's ſelf for acts of charity, or good works, is the motion of ſpiritual pride; which is the worſt and moſt dangerous.

For all other vices tend to make us do evil works, &c.

When we have done any good work which may be remarkable, let us preſerve our hearts from the vain complajſance, which preſently ſtarts up to deſtroy and corrupt it; for there is no work however holy it may appear which can pleaſe the divine Majeſty, when ſpoyl'd by that vice.

What then does it avail to give frely. &c.

It will avail us nothing to renounce our

our goods, if we do not alſo renounce our ſelves; for our Lord does not ſay bleſſed are the poor in goods; but *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit.* Happy is the ſoul which moved by the love of Jeſus Chriſt, gives all to the poor, for to live afterwards in a profound humility; but woe be to thoſe who make of that generous renunciation a ſubject of vanity and preſumption.

Live therefore I ſay with concord &c.

When the rule requires union of minds that regards the intention and the will, which ought to be the ſame in all; but when it demands union of hearts, that is ſtill ſome thing more, for it reaches even to all the actions and conduct of our life. A religious perſon who deſires to live up to this ſpirit of union, muſt break her ſelf of all her ill habits, and be neither ma-

licious

licious, nor irregular, nor obſtinate in her fancies, nor troubleſome to others by her unquietneſs; and then she muſt uſe ſo much circumſpection in her actions, and ſo ſquare her life that she may be in perfect concord with the reſt to tend wholy to God. For the order we ought to obſerve to attain to the perfection of our ſtate; is firſt to have but one and the ſame will and deſigne to ſave our ſouls, and then act ſtill in concert by the motion of the ſame heart; ſo that all the different functions both ſpiritual and temporal, may be done with an entire coreſpondancy of charity to one another. *We honour God in one another*, when loving each other for the love of him, we with all poſſible care obſerve his precepts; and we shall have the happyneſs to *become his temples*, when we shall carefully endeavour to draw his ſpirit into us, by doing our beſt to render

render Almighty God all the worſhip his Divine Majeſty expects from us: but it belongs to that ſovereign Lord to compleat the work by debaſing his grandor to honour us with his preſence, and enlighten us with his grace.

Be attentive to prayer at the &c.

To prevent the time of prayer is a ſigne of forecaſt, to pray in the times appointed for it, is an act of obedience, but to miſs the time of prayer is a fault of negligence. If our prayers ought to be aſſiduous, it is not leſs important that they be ardent and fervorous; for the bleſſings that Almighty God promiſes us, are ſo great and conſiderable that they require a purchaſer earneſt and full of deſires. And when the divine Majeſty ſeems not to be moved with our firſt vows, we muſt arm our ſelves with courage and redou-

double our instances and prayers in a more forcible manner, which is an agreable violence to God.

In the place of prayer, &c.

The church is the house of God, and the gate of heaven; it is there sinners are reconciled, receiving pardon of their sins; it is there the just are more and more sanctified, receiving fresh increases of grace: it is there the divine misterys are celebrated: and in fine there the greatest Sacraments are administer'd: We must be carefull not to do any thing in that sanctuary, which may offend the eyes of the Divine Majesty who resides there, or hinder those who would pray therein.

And when you serve Almighty God. &c.

To render our prayers pure, and shelter them from distractions, a means as excellent as necessary is, to

to walk continually in the law of God, and accuſtome our ſelves to follow his holy will with all our heart; for what we hear, what we ſee, what we ſay and do often, muſt of neceſſity come often into our minds, and there, without our reflecting of it, take place as in their proper and natural dwelling.

You shall not ſing any other thing. &c.

It is neither fiting nor decent that the choir ſong should be diverſified according to every ones fancy; but it muſt be kept firm and invariable to what has been written and ordain'd by predeceſſors. The ſame may be ſaid of other cuſtomes of the houſe, which ought to be regulated with authority and diſcretion.

Subdue your flesh and keep it under. &c.

We ought to have ſo much care of

of our bodies that they may not want ſtrength to diſcharge their duties; but we muſt tame, and afflict them ſufficiently by abſtinences and other auſterities, to hinder revolts, and to keep them from maſtering the ſpirit.

And if any one cannot faſt. &c.

We muſt not only obſerve an exact temperance in eating, and drinking as to the quantity and quality, but alſo ſubject our ſelves to the hours appointed; thô we cannot faſt; except we are ſick.

When you are ſet at table. &c.

In our meals, it is not ſufficient to be ſeated at a material table, we muſt alſo be preſent at a ſpiritual one. We muſt not only feed our bodies, but our ſouls alſo; and we ought

ought to be as much more delighted with the ſpiritual food, than with the corporal, as the ſoul ſurpaſſes the body in excellence, and dignity. This food proper to the ſoul, is what we should hungar after, labouring to prepare our hearts for it, that what we hear may not render our judgment more rigorous

When ſuch perſons as are by a former and conſtant ill health. &c.

Thoſe who have moſt ſtrength and health, ought to take upon them the rigour of abſtinence, and obſerve it exactly; compaſſionately bearing with the weakneſs of others.

But rather be glad that they. &c.

They to whom Almighty God has given ſtrength enough to be con-

contented with the common life, who ſeek neither delicacies nor ſuperfluities, ought to rejoyce in their happyneſs; for the more the life they lead is ſtrict and auſtere, the greater and ſolider is their happyneſs: for ſtreight and narrow is the way which leads to eternal life. Rejoyce then you, who for the love of Jeſus Chriſt, can reduce your ſelves to live upon a little: for it kills vices, extinguishes the ardours of concupiſcence, it nourishes vertues, gives ſtrength to the mind, and an elevation to the ſoul which makes it capable of divine things.

And if unto thoſe perſons who from &c.

It is juſt and reaſonable that thoſe who are of a higher degree ſhould receive ſomthing more than the reſt; and we at the ſame time muſt learn to ſupport the infir-

firmities of thoſe who have leſs health and ſtrength.

Neither should they take it ill. &c.

It is an evil not leſs pernicious than deteſtable, that the poor forgeting their firſt condition should ſeek delicacies and repoſe, where the rich for the love of God ſtrive to overcome themſelves by auſterities and abſtinence.

As 't is neceſſary ſick perſons should. &c.

When without exception of perſons, we render neceſſary aſſiſtances to our neighbour, we procure the kingdome of heaven for our ſelves; for thô our good works are paſſing as well as their neceſſities, yet the reward of them will laſt for eternity: and if we would have the love of God in our ſelves, we muſt be charitable

to

to our neighbours: for we may be ſure that when we are ſo, we render our ſervices not to them, but to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf.

But as Soon as they have recover'd. &c.

It is a happy cuſtome, continually to cut off the carnall deſires which fight againſt the ſoul: 't is a happy cuſtome to abſtain from, and willingly deprive our ſelves of the uſe of many things: again I ſay, 't is a happy cuſtome to chaſtiſe ones body, and bring it into ſubjection.

Which beſt becomes the ſervants. &c.

There are none who can keep themſelves firm enough to bear the aſſaults of the interiour war, if they have not firſt overthrown the carnal and domeſtick enemy which is in themſelves. I mean the

inordinate appetite of eating and drinking; becauſe if we don't begin by the utter deſtruction of the obſtacles which are neareſt to us, it will be ever in vain to undertake thoſe which are furtheſt off. Nay thô we should ſomtimes do brave actions, yet being ſubject to the ſenſuality of ſo baſe and unworthy a pleaſure, we should loſe the fruit of our generous deeds, and choak up the great vertues we have endeavour'd to produce. Let us then content our ſelves with food neceſſary to maintain life, and not ſeek what ſenſuality deſires to flatter its delicacy.

Let every one think her ſelf moſt. &c.

Thoſe who know how to moderate themſelves in the uſe of terrene things, are enrich'd with heavenly bleſſings; and get treaſures of graces which recompenſe them a hundred fold.

For

For tis better to need leſs. &c.

It is better to ſuffer the want of ſomething for the love of God, than to have an abundance which gives us beyond what is neceſſary; for the poverty which makes us want ſomething thereby to be conformable to Jeſus Chriſt, produces humility in us, which is the ſource of all good: whereas abundance brings forth pride, which is the begining of all evil. Now the leaſt that a ſervant of God can do, to tend to this holy diſpoſition, is, to wish to be worſe accomodated even in food and cloathing, than neceſſity requires.

You shall not be particular in your habit &c.

Let us endeavour to pleaſe our Lord by our actions, and not by our dreſs, adorning our ſouls with the ſpiritual ornaments of chaſtity, humi-

humility, meekneſs, obedience, patience, and charity, for thoſe are the gems which make our ſouls amiable to the king of heaven.

In all your behaviour there muſt appear nothing &c.

Let us ſo behave our ſelves that our profeſſion may be ſeen by our works, which will be when we have purity in our hearts, modeſty in our countenances, gravity in our gate, circumſpection in our poſtures, maturity in our geſtures, the ſpirit of religion in the air of our dreſs; ſo that our ſanctity may ſhine on all ſides, decency regulate us in all things, and humility never forſake any of our actions.

If you chance to caſt your eyes, &c.

An evil look is ſufficient to excite an ill deſire ſo they that de-

ſire to be faithfull to Almighty God, and to be carefull not to offend that ſoverigne Maſter and dreadfull judge, muſt neceſſarily repreſs the liberty of their eyes: for it is impoſſible to overcome a vice entirely, if we do not avoid, not only what is the cauſe of it, but alſo that which breeds the occaſion of it.

Becauſe not only by deeds but alſo, &c.

The diſorders and ſenſible irregularities of concupiſcence, are not only excited by that ſecret bent to evil which is conceal'd in the heart, but they alſo often take their riſe from looks which is ſomething exteriour.

And if it should happen that the evil inclination of the heart. &c.

We muſt correct the leaſt faults againſt

againſt chaſtitity as ſoon as they firſt peep out; for if we make a cuſtome to ſuffer them either upon our own conſcience, or on thoſe of the perſons under our charge, the leaſt evils ſo neglected will ſoon grow to great crimes, which will provoke the wrath of God.

But put the caſe she is not diſcover'd. &c.

In all the faults we commit either by thought, word, or deed, let us fear with a religious fear, the eyes of that dreadful judge before whom we are to appear; for thô we may ſometimes hide our faults from the eyes of men, yet all is naked and open to the ſight of God. Let us avoid all ſin wihout diſtinction of great and little, there being none which can eſcape juſt vengeance, if not expiated in this life.

A religions perſon then ought to fear. &c.

If the love of God is not ſtrong enough to diſengage us from our evil inclinations, let his fear at leaſt keep us in. And if the joys of heaven have not charmes enough to invite us, let the torments of hell imprint a wholſome fear in our hearts. If you would open your heart to the fear of God, reflect often that he ſees all things, and has an indefatigable attention upon you; ſo in all your actions, in all your words, in all your affaires, think of that divine eye whieh never ſleeps, and you will fear to do any thing which may diſpleaſe ſo dreadful a Majeſty, before whom the Angels tremble. *The begining of wiſdome is the fear of our Lord.*

Whenſoever therefore, you are together, &c.

Chaſtity is a vertue, the excellency and beauty of which ſurpaſſes all that man's eloquence can expreſs; we muſt then uſe an indefatigable vigilance to render our lives ſuch with one another, that we may always preſerve it moſt pure; for if we loſe it, all is loſt with it; and in loſing our God we alſo loſe our ſelves. Yet no body can conſerve it, either in himſelf or in others without the aſſiſtance of Almighty God. Thetefore we ought to be ſo faithful to the practice of his commandments, that we may abide in him, and he in us; and ſo perſevere till death in juſtice and chaſtity, by the Almighty ſuccours of him who being God liveth, and reigneth, world without end, Amen.

And

And if you perceive in any of your companions. &c.

If we are engaged in the conduct of others, we ought to use all possible care to discover faults, and to correct them; for if we do not in this world apply a remedy to them, we shall suffer for it in the next. Wonder not therefore if those who are obliged to reprehend faults, think it their duty sometimes to be importune: for that importunity is not an effect of anger, but a dispensation of charity.

Neither ought you to think your selves malicious. &c.

They are truly excited with the spirit of charity and mercy who conceal not the spiritual wounds of their neighbour by their silence, since one cannot do a greater act of mercy to a miserable creature, than to save his life when he is upon the

point of loſing it: and doubtleſs they that do ſo will receive an ample reward of the Almighty who has ſaid, *bleſſed are the mercyfull. &c.*

But if she denys the fact. &c.

They that will not amend for a mild reprehenſion, ought to be chaſtiſed with more ſeverity; for the art of curing ſouls reſembles that of curing bodies; ſince in each the sharpeſt remedies muſt be apply'd however painful they are, when the wounds cannot be healed by more gentle fomentations.

And in caſe she refuſes the penance. &c.

It is better that ſevere condemnation should fall upon one criminal to ſave many perſons, than to put the ſalvation of a whole community in danger by tolerating the ill example of one only.

The ſame method I here preſcribe.

We muſt in ſuch ſort love our neighbour, as not to love their vices; for there is a great deal of difference to be made between what they are, and what they do: in ſhort we muſt love them becauſe they are the work of God, and hate their errours becauſe they are ſins. Let us remember that we are all ſinners, and by our frailty capable of falling into all ſorts of exceſs, and therefore we muſt reprehend as the rule ordains, with gentleneſs and charity towards the guilty, when we exert an exteriour zeal, and even hatred againſt the crime; for in reality we ought always to hate the one, and never ceaſe to love the other.

But if any one ſhould yield ſo far to evil.

Our holy father calls a *great evil*.

The

The fault of the religious who receive any thing without their ſuperiour's knowledge; becauſe ſo to hide what one receives, or has received, is to break order. And it is to commit a *great evil* to become prevaricator of the rules eſtabliſh'd in the order one is engaged in. Nevertheleſs the evil which is diſcover'd by the humility of a voluntary confeſſion, becomes leſs, and more pardonable.

But if she be taken in the fault, &c.

They who conceal the evil they have done, ſin in a grieveous and mortal manner, eucreaſing by their ſilence what they ſhould have diminish'd by confeſſing it. Pure and holy love ſays S. Jeromc, knows nothing of thoſe *billet doux* which are reciprocally written and ſent in ſecret; it is not maintain'd by little preſents, and thoſe that are pleaſed with

with such trifles, the more satisfaction they find in them, the more they reject the possession of that which is truly great and high. We therefore who have the double obligation, of living holily for our selves, and of giving others edifying example, let us look upon such fooleries as unworthy of us.

Your cloathes shall be kept, &c.

One reason why our holy father will have our habit put in common, is for fear any should think they possess'd as their own the very habit they wear, if they were permitted to keep them in a particular place.

Moreover you must as much as possible, not concern. &c.

They that perfectly love God, and duely renounce the desires of the flesh, cut off many things from their own use, as superfluous, which

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in another diſpoſition would ſeem to them, of an inevitable neceſſity. Let us then exerciſe our ſelves in loving Almighty God with all our heart, and endeavour by the ſtrength of that love to be content with the neceſſary, and to retrench the ſuperfluous: ſo that if on the one ſide charity allows us what we want, ſenſuality on the other, may not make us ask what we do not ſtand in need of. Charity ought to be our guide in all things, and she ſeeks not her own intereſt, she preferrs the common good before private conveniency; she makes one love to be little and and abject in the houſe of our Lord: and experience teackes us that thoſe who poſſeſs that vertue in a perfect degree, are ſo far from granting themſelves ſuperfluities, that they even find retrenchments to be made, in what is thought neceſſary.

But if here upon, contentions or murmurings arise. &c.

The habit of our soul is the grace of God when it environs her: it is the presence of the holy Ghost when he abides in her: and one may say that our heart is perfectly and richly clad, when it has peace, charity, goodness, humility, patience, concord, meekness. &c. But if we begin to have disputes, to grumble, and quarell, our soul is presently left in a shamefull nakedness: for vertue and vice cannot dwell together in the same heart; wherefore there's no self interest which we ought not to sacrifice, nor no care which we are not obliged to take, in order to avoid disputes and quarrels; and the most efficacious means to do so, is to think our selves inferiour to all, and to seek rather the interest of others than our own. Humility and charity have the property not only never

never to excite any difference, but even to reunite and reconcile thoſe who are at odds.

And this is to be obſerved to the end that no body may work any, &c.

We cannot take a more excellent model of charity in all things, than our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, ſince he himſelf has commanded us to do what he has done: if then his Divine Majeſty, thô he was Maſter and Lord, ſought not his own, would it not be a great evil among us, if any work'd for her ſelf? And if Jeſus prefer'd the common good of men before his own, ought we not to apply our ſelves to the common work with more fervour and joy than if it was our own in particular?

Wherefore you muſt know that the more you take care, &c.

Charity is the Mother of good works

works, the root of vertue, the source of all good. And they make great progress in charity who excited by the love of Jesus Christ, contemn all worldly things, are not moved with the least desire to reserve the smallest part of them; and who put all they have into the common mass to be distributed among their companions. Such walk I say, and run in that most high and excellent way, who treading under foot all terrene greatness and beauty, have their hearts already in heaven, and only sigh for the eternal blessings. When the rule says, *because charity which is permanent, thus is prefer'd before those transitory things &c.* it means, that in all our works and actions, the love of God and our neighbour ought to be our rule; and that in all the course of our life charity should ever enlighten us, always animate us, and always guide us: because the fulfilling of these two pre-

precepts contains all that is written in the law, and in the Prophets.

Wherefore if any perſon either man &c.

In the life we have embraced it is not allowable to receive any thing in ſecret, nor to poſſeſs it in propriety; and there is no better way to extinguish avarice, than to cut of all ſuperfluity: nor no more certain way to bring our charity to a high perfection, than to keep our ſelves within the bounds of holy poverty: becauſe not having the power to retain earthly goods, the ſoul which cannot be without ſome object to occupy it, is forced to replenish it ſelf, with the heavenly bleſſings.

And if any perſon hides what is &c.

Theft is placed in the rank of great crimes, even the canons have ſo determin'd it; and in reality the religious perſon who hides and keeps

keeps ſecret what has been given him, holds the place in the church that the traytor Judas had in the company of the Apoſtles. The fruits of avarice being then ſo fatal and ſo mortal, let perſons conſecrated to God, renounce all deſires of hoarding up temporal things; and let them never keep any thing in ſecret that has been given them, for fear of committing a deteſtable ſin by yeilding to the ſuggeſtions of the devil.

Your cloathes shall be wash'd at a. &c.

The more one washes and cleanſes the exteriour by a motive of vain glory, the more one fully's and dirty's the interiour. It is not the beauty of the habit, but innocence of manners, that adorns the religious perſon; and thoſe who have ſo great a deſire of that exteriour beauty which pleaſes the world, are not moved with the deſire of that interiour beauty which is ſo pleaſing to God.

God. But for fear that any one, ſhould advance theſe maximes beyond their due ſenſe there follows in the Rule.

Baths alſo for the body, when need is. &c.

For that which is neceſſary ought to be conſider'd, as being profitable, and having a good end; but that which proceeds from ſenſuality is always a vice and cannot be referr'd to God.

But let all be done without murmuring, &c.

Our holy father by a ſpirit of wiſdome ordains that in neceſſity, even thoſe who are not willing, be conſtrain'd to take ſolaces, and that thoſe who ſeek them meerly to pleaſe ſenſuality, be hinder'd from them. For 't is a general rule that one muſt yeld to neceſſity, and not obey ſenſuality, which we ought to miſtruſt

always as a deceitful enemy which so disguises things that it represents as good and profitable, things that are in themselves hurtful, and sometimes mortal.

For sometimes one thinks that which is pleasing, good for health. &c.

We must curb the irregularities of the flesh, by the prudent severity of the spirit. There are some people who let themselves be carry'd away by the rigour of the spirit, and others who abandon themselves to the delicacy of the flesh, by the excessive care they take of it, and each of these ought to be corrected.

Notwithstanding, if any one has &c.

It is very reasonable, that those should be believed whose good manners, and holy life bear witness that

that they are ſervants of God; for it is not ſo much from the mouth of thoſe who ſpeak to us, as from their manner of life that the knowledge of the truth is found out. They who truly ſerve God, fear to offend him not only by their deeds, but alſo by their words, which ought to make us lead our life in ſuch a manner that our words may be believed without difficulty.

And if it be uncertain whether that &c.

Thô we ought to believe thoſe ſick perſons whoſe vertue we are acquainted with, yet we mnſt not therefore preſently grant them all they deſire; for infirmity ſometimes makes one deſire what is contrary to ones recovery: and the juſt themſelves are ſometimes tempted with evil deſires. Wherefore in uncertain caſes it is neceſſary

to consult the Physician, that is to say, a person who can decide the matter.

But if it be judged necessary that such persons should go to the bath &c.

A good conscience is sufficient for our selves, but for others we must also have an irreproachable reputation, which diffuses the sweet ardour of Jesus Christ on all sides. They who neglect their reputation, are cruel and injust to their neighbours whom they deprive of their due, especially if it be a person of note. Therefore we must go two and two together, to give authority to our reputation by the substantial witnesses of the innocency of our lives. *And with whom the superiour appoints*, that she may be vigilant for the security of the persons she must answer for, and that we may practice the vertue of obedience.

The care of the sick who either are &c.

The strongest ought to bear the weaknesses of the infirm, and not contemn the sick for the disguist there is in serving them. For thus is practiced that all divine vertue *charity*, and the law of Jesus Christ fulfill'd, which is a law of love. The office of love is to bear one another's burdens; and the different infirmities which happen sometimes to one, sometimes to another, offer us the occasions of performing the same. But on the other side, let the sick reflect, that it is thrô charity they are so carefully tended; and let them avoid as much as may be, to afflict and overcharge those who serve them. Let them on the contrary take care to humble themselves, and give thanks to God for the charity they receive; for fear the sickness which was sent them

to

to purifie their ſouls should ſerve only to make them fall into more conſiderable faults.

And ſuch as are officers of the Cellary &c.

Let thoſe to whom offices are comitted, behave themſelvcs in ſuch a manner, and ſerve their ſiſters with ſo much charity, that they may not offend Almighty God in the performance of them; either by murmuring or by moving others to impatience at their careleſſneſs.

The books shall be ask'd at a certain &c.

Here we learn to diſtinguish the times for prayer, reading, and work; for theſe are three exerciſes which the Rule appoints us as neceſſary to our ſalvation. Prayer becauſe it purify's us; reading, becauſe it inſtructs us; and work, becauſe it is alſo a particular ſource of happyneſs.

neſs. Our holy father by ordering us to ask the books daily, shews that he intends we should read often, from which we gain moſt conſiderable advantages: but we muſt remark that to give this exerciſe its due profit, we muſt not when we leave it, paſs to idleneſs, but to work; for idleneſs is the ſoul's foe, and the ancient enemy of mankind eaſily enclines thoſe perſons to vice whom he finds idle.

But as for your habit or shoes &c.

This has been already ſayd, that thoſe who have offices, muſt force themſelves to ſerve their ſiſters mildly for the love of God; and give them in proper times the things they want; without complaint, ill humour, or delay; but in an obliging, chearful manner. And let thoſe take care to whom neceſſaries are given, not to ask with too great im-

importunity any thing that is not ſuitable to their ſtate; for all the ſuperfluities they ſhall thus have, will become ſubjects of death to them. Beſides how can we pretend to be the poor of Jeſus Chriſt, or explate our ſins, if we do not patiently ſuffer ſome want, and retrench the uſe of things permitted proportionably to our paſt irregularities?

Let there be no contention among you &c.

The vices encreaſe by little and little, for when we will not hinder our tongue from many unprofitable words, we come at laſt to utter ſuch as are entirely evil; for ſometimes we paſs to murmurings, ſometimes to detractions, ſometimes to conteſtations and quarrels, which begining by a little anger, leads us in fine to formal hatreds. Wherefore to avoid ſo great an evil, we

muſt

must strive to resist the first motions of anger however just and reasonable they seem to us, and recover our first serenity as soon as possible.

Whosoever should offend another by injurious language &c.

As a person who has thus offended another, has committed a great fault, so she ought to do a great penance for it, and ask pardon with all her heart, a sincere regret, and profound humility, of the party offended; who ought to forgive it without reproaches or disputes. A Christian who is long before he will be reconciled to his brother, is also long before he can appease Almighty God in his own regard; and it is in vain for him to seek the favour of his creator, after having offended him, if he neglects to appease his neighbour speedily, whom he has offended.

But in caſe both have offended each other &c.

If we do not pardon the injuſtices that have been done us: when we ſay to Almighty God, *forgive us our debts, &c.* that conditional prayer convicts us as criminal, and turns to our own damage; it provokes the wrath of God againſt us, and inſtead of being to us a ſource of ſalvation, it becomes the cauſe of our perdition.

But a perſon that is often tempted to anger &c.

Anger effaces the image of God in us, it makes us go out of the ways of Juſtice; it cauſes us to loſe all the benedictions and advantages of living in a community, and in fine, renders us unworthy the commerce of men. We are ſo proud that if we have any difference with any one, we blush to make the firſt

first satisfaction, we cannot resolve to make the first steps, thô we would willingly be reconciled. That we may get out of so hurtful a disposition, let us think of what Jesus, our head and our king, has done for us: let the consideration of his charity, discover to us the greatness of our malice; and let his example both confound and edifie us.

She that will not forgive her sister &c.

Jesus Christ wills, and ordains, that he who comes to offer at his altar, if he is at odds with his brother, leave there his offring, and go to be reconciled with him, whom he has left in bitterness; to teach us that if at the very time when the worship of God, and the ministry of his sacrifice requires our presence, he will not have us deferr to perform the duty of reconciliation, we are certainly more obliged

bliged to it at all other times.

If Almighty God punishes cholerick persons, and those who retain the remembrance of injuries, he will doubtless chastise those, who having been the cause of their fall, will not take one step to help them up again, that is, to appease them by a just satisfaction. They will get no advantage by being in the Monastery who will not ask forgiveness at all; and 't is in vain for their salvation that they are mingled in the society of many others, since they are not in a condition, neither to appease the wrath of God by their sacrifices, nor to advance in perfection by good works.

Beware therefore of hard words. &c.

A Soft answer breaks anger, and a hard word raises up fury. A mild word multiply's friends and appeases enemies. These are the maxims of wisdome, and

and ought to be the rule of those who would get the perfection of sanctity.

However if they should chance to escape your mouth &c.

In such cases we must presently make satisfaction by mild and obliging words opposite to the hard ones, which perhaps we utter'd by surprise, or by frailty; to the end that the disturbance and wound we had caused, may be cured by the remedy of an humble acknowledgement. And if the servants of God are obliged to set a vigilant guard over their mouths at all times, that is still more necessary when they are attack'd by injuries, or defamed by calumnies.

There must not be any sensual love &c.

There's great difference between the

the love which is framed as it were in the boſome of nature, and charity which ſprings from the obedience we owe to God's commandments. Thoſe who love their neighbour for natural reaſons, will not on that account obtain the heavenly rewards promiſed to thoſe who love thrô a principle of charity. It is charity only, which makes us diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt; and that vertue has two characters which diſtinguishes it from carnal love. The *firſt* is to love our friends in God, and the *ſecond* to love our enemies for God; and we may truly ſay we love our enemies when we have no grief for their proſperity, nor joy in their adverſity.

Unto your ſuperiour, as unto a Mother &c.

Obedience is a vertue which produces all other vertues in the ſoul, and having produced them, she is the

the faithfull Guardian of them. Obedience is better than ſacrifice. The obedient man gains victories over himſelf, which is the greateſt of conqueſts. We ought to perſevere in the vertue of obedience even till death. Obedience muſt never move us to do ill, but ſometimes for the ſake of it, we ought to interrupt the good we are about. But becauſe it may happen that what is ordain'd us by obedience, has nothing diſpleaſing in it; that we may not loſe the merit of ſo great a vertue in the like occaſions, it is expedient to know that obedience ought to have ſomething of us, in what is diſguſtful to ſenſuality, and on the contrary it muſt have nothing at all of us, in what is agreable to ſenſe: to the end that the obedient man may get ſo much the more glory in adverſity as he willingly ſubmits to it for the love of God; and that in proſperity he may remain as much more humble, and

by conſequence ſhelter'd from all danger, as he only yields by a perfect ſubmiſſion to the will of God, which has raiſed him to ſome honorable poſt, the glory of which he never ſought for.

Obedience is an ornament which accompany's and ſets off the beauty of innocent ſouls; it is the character that Jeſus gave of his sheep: but the obedience which that divine redeemer requires, always includes innocence of life, and they will never paſs for innocent in the ſight of God, who refuſe to obey thoſe he has given them for ſuperiours.

Wherefore to the end all theſe things. &c

Theſe obſervances of regularity have been ſet down, to the end they may be all put in practice; if then any of them be not well obſerved, the fault muſt be reme-

dy'd

dy'd as ſoon as poſſible: for ſince we have vow'd to keep them exactly, and ſworne to conform our lives to them, we cannot neglect them, but at the peil of our ſouls.

She who is your ſuperiour muſt not &c.

The true Paſtors are thoſe who in high dignities have no joy but in rendering to others all the ſervices and ſuccours they are capable of: who delight not in the honour, but in the charge: who affect not power, but love charity: who ſeek not to be ſerved, but to ſerve.

She ſhall be reſpected and honour'd in the exteriour.

But thô on their ſide the charity they have in heart ſo debaſes them, yet the authority of their charge ſhould move the reſpect of thoſe who are under their

obedience; for ſuperiours hold the place of Jeſus Chriſt.

But in the ſight of God she shall lye &c.

The more ſuperiours are exalted exteriourly, the more they ought to fear at the bottom of their ſouls; and conceive a real contempt of themſelves, conſidering as their betters thoſe who pay them ſuch great honours.

She shall make her ſelf a pattern &c.

As ſuperiours are above all in honour and dignity, ſo they ought to ſurpaſs all in ſanctity; to the end that their ſubjects may learn by their manner of life, as in an excellent book, how they ought to regulate theirs.

Unquiet and buſy perſons she muſt correct &c.

They are obliged to conſider carefully, what are the manners and diſpoſitons of each, that they may know how to deal accordingly with them.

Let her willingly accept a correction &c.

Superiours ought at once to inſpire a reſpectful fear, and have a compaſſionate love; they muſt make themſelves be fear'd by the proud and rebellious, but exert a tender love to thoſe who ſerve God willingly, and live in piety and humility: and when ſuperiours live conformably to what they ordain, then they are fit to impoſe upon others the neceſſity of living according to the rule.

Therefore you should be more tractable &c.

Inferiours ought in all occasions to pay a perfect obedience to their superiours, whom they see oppresst with labours for love of them: in which they have compassion of themselves because they practice that which is written: *have mercy on thine own soul, pleasing God.* And they have compassion of their superious, because by obeying their orders they ease them of the burden they are charged with.

Our Lord grant that you, as affecting &c.

Nothing could be more proper after the reading of these rules, than the addition of this prayer. And as often as we leave reading, or the divine office &c. we should have recourse to prayer, to the end that the vertue and efficacy of

of the word of God may remain in our hearts, and bring forth ſpiritual fruits in our actions.

As affecting ſpiritual beauty &c.

It is with reaſon that the rule is thus expreſs'd here; for we can never perform all the precepts of a regular life if we do not feel our ſelves moved, and drawn to it by the charmes of the ſpiritual beauty: for no man can do good againſt his will, thô the action he does be good in its ſelf.

And become odoriferous with the &c.

This that here is added, regards a holy life, and a good reputation; to teach us that theſe two things should always go together. Thoſe who only ſerve God thrô a ſpirit of fear, are *ſlaves under the law*: But they who fulfill the command-

mandments by a motive of love, *are free children under the liberty of grace.*

But to the end that you see your selves in this little book &c.

The reading this rule often, is recommended to us, that thereby having it well imprinted in our memory; it may come often into our mind, and appear in our actions. It is with reason call'd a looking glass, because we may use it as a faithful mirrour to consider the aspect of our soul; and see if we are hansome or ugly, just or unjust: if we advance, or go back in the way of perfection: in fine, if we are pleasing to God, or so unfortunate as to displease him.

And when you find that you have observed all that is written &c.

We ought to render continual thanks

thanks to the father of lights; for all excellent grace and perfect gifts deſcends from him: and no body will ever become happy even by Almighty God's gifts, however great they are, if they are ungrateful to their divine benefactor. For the ſenſe of theſe words is this. Never ceaſe to pay thanks to our Lord and our God, from whoſe bounty and liberality, you receive all things.

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